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The Emperor Charlemagne
From a portrait in Nürnberg Museum
Hoefle, photo

STORIES FOR THE HISTORY HOUR

FROM AUGUSTUS TO ROLF

BY

NANNIE NIEMEYER

LATE SCHOLAR OF SOMERVILLE COLLEGE OXFORD



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PREFACE

THESE stories are written solely for the purpose of being told. They are meant for the teacher to tell, not for the children to read. Consequently their effect depends largely upon good speaking and narrating. They should be told fluently and without interruption. The speaker should give free play to natural feeling for drama.

These tales are stories which I wished to tell, and of which I could find no satisfactory version. Many good stories are omitted here, although they fall within the period treated (50 B.C. to A.D. 900), because numerous suitable versions of them exist. For this reason the lives of Cæsar and of Alfred are left out of this book.

The stories have been told to children, with the exception of "Sturmi," "Charles the Great," and "Onesimus." They were used as the basis of three terms' work in Standard II. Fourteen stories may seem a short allowance for seventy-six lessons, but it did not prove to be so. Each story should be told at length, so that it remains in the child's mind for some time, for it gains

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then in massiveness and reality. Time was needed also for revision, and for much work of other kinds at appropriate places. Cornelius's hymn was learned and sung. We built Pliny's Aqueduct with clay bricks; it fell down three times, and we had to learn a good deal about exact workmanship and careful measurement before we could make it stand. To make a very simple time-chart was a lesson in itself, and then the chart needed to be brought up to date at intervals. Pictures occupied the children too. The same picture of the Forum in Rome was in use again and again, and at last the children knew their way about it well. References to this picture account for some obvious gaps in the text. The difficulty was not to eke the material out, but to do, in the time allowed, all the work which suggested itself. Of course some stories and some passages ought to have no elaboration whatsoever.

The sections marked by asterisks show the portions which we told in one lesson. Other teachers in other circumstances should make their own divisions at their discretion.

The aim of these tales is to put the most important historic truth a child can comprehend into a form which a child can understand. For instance, the Roman Empire was greatest as a civilizing force, and as a ruler of provinces.

Statesmen can study the Roman imperial rule in Mommsen's books, but to children Rome can be shown, in the same aspect, by simple heroic stories such as the story of Decebalus. Each story must be tested by the question : "What great historic movement will this tale help to make clear ?"

Apart from other due apologies, these tales need a defence for the freedom which I have used in telling them. They are not always literally true as they stand. This may seem a very serious admission to make, especially in the Scriptural story of Onesimus. There are two grounds of defence. First, some historical originals belong to the type of annals, and so they are unsuitable for children. Annalists' statements must be enlarged, or they will make no impression. Secondly, other sources tell their tales exactly as children should hear them, but there are gaps between the parts told. Then the links must be invented, as appropriately as possible. Sometimes it seems better to trust to a suggestion, based on evidence, than to spoil the story for lack of it. Even where the sources are of the best sort a child often needs the help of a mature imagination before he can receive the full meaning of the tale. One cannot, however, remind oneself too often that the imagination must be controlled by knowledge.

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For the history story must be as much history as story.

I am indebted to Mr W. Huyshe, and to his publishers, Messrs George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., for permission to reprint the verses on page 140 from his translation of Adamnan's *Life of St Columba*.

N. N.

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STORIES FOR THE HISTORY HOUR

I

AUGUSTUS

AFTER Cæsar returned to Gaul from Britain he went back to Rome. He lived in his house there. His house stood upon a hill which rose on the left of the market-place as you looked to the Temple of Jupiter. The house had doors of bronze; a slave kept watch at them. There lived in the house Cæsar's niece, who was a widow. Her little son lived there too. His name was Octavius.

Soon Cæsar went away again. He mounted his horse, and his soldiers marched away in rows, with their swords swinging at their sides. Then every one said, as they came back into the house: "Cæsar is the greatest general, even among the Romans." Octavius had always heard people say this. Octavius wanted there to be war always, so that Cæsar might always be able to lead his men into battle, and bring back victory.

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Octavius knew, in a strange way, that there would be war always. This is how he knew it. Walking through the market-place, leaving the Temple of Vesta on the left, one came to a place on the right-hand side. A narrow passage led from the market-place to the street beyond. This passage had doors at the front end. The doors were made of dark, shining bronze, smooth with age. They were always open. Inside, in the shadow, stood a statue of a god. His face looked out toward the market-place. At the back of his head, lo, he had another face! It looked toward the street.

Once Octavius walked past with his slave schoolmaster. He asked him: "Why has he got two faces?" "He has two faces because he is called Janus, who opens and closes, because he looks back toward the Past and forward to the Future." "But why are his doors always open?" said Octavius. "When his doors are open you may know that the Roman people are at war in some part of the lands that lie under their power. The doors are open because the god has gone out to be with the Roman men in their camp." "Have the gates been open all my uncle's life then?" "Boy," said the slave, "no man now living has ever seen them shut!"

Whenever Octavius passed that way the gates were open. Cæsar was fighting wherever there

was war. He conquered the barbarians in every battle. More than once he fought even against other Romans. This caused great grief and trouble in Rome. But even in those fights Cæsar won the victory for the most part.

Octavius wished to go to the war with Cæsar. He wanted it more and more every year. Once he saw Cæsar. Then he asked him : "When may I come with you ?" Cæsar laid his finger on the purple stripe which edged Octavius's cloak and said : "When you are a man." For when a Roman was old enough to be a soldier he took off the purple-edged cloak of a child, and put on the man's cloak of plain white. So Octavius knew he must wait until he was older. He feared that the god Janus would close his gates before he would be a man. Nevertheless the gates remained always open.

Meantime Octavius had his lessons to learn. He learned to ride. He learned to swim too. His slave schoolmaster told him this story :

"Cæsar, your uncle, heard the story of Horatius, and how, with his harness on his back, Horatius sprang headlong into the Tiber. When he was a young man, Cæsar vowed that he would do the same, thinking it shameful for an unwounded man to be afraid to do what a wounded man had done. So at the flood-time of Father Tiber he sprang in from the farther bank, having on his leather cuirass, his sword,

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and his greaves upon his legs. And sometimes he was under the waves, and sometimes above. He nearly drowned that day, yet he did reach this side, so strong a swimmer is he."

Octavius learnt to write, in the manner of the Romans. His slave schoolmaster gave him a flat piece of wood covered with wax, rather like the grease from a candle. The wax was very smooth, with no lumps in it. Across the wax Octavius ruled straight lines, to keep the writing straight. He took a little stick, rather like a modelling tool, pointed at one end, and round at the other. He called this stick his *stylus*. Then he traced out his letters in this way : OCTAVIVS. If he wrote badly the slave schoolmaster said : "No, no, that's wrong—turn your *stylus*." He said this as we say : "Rub it out." Then with the round end Octavius smoothed the wax until the bad letter had gone altogether.

The slave said : "Write this sentence : 'He who can keep his word can do everything else.'

"Now write : 'Gaul is divided into three parts.'" When it was written he asked : "Do you know whose sentence that is ?" "No," said Octavius ; "but it was my uncle who conquered Gaul." "And it was your uncle who wrote that sentence," said the slave, "for he has written a whole book to tell the Roman people all about his wars and the land of Gaul."

At last Octavius was fifteen. Then he took

off his cloak with the purple stripe and put on the plain white cloak. The doors of Janus were still open. Cæsar said : "Now you shall come with me to the wars." Octavius rejoiced with all his heart.

But the times grew always worse and worse. For Cæsar, with some of the Romans, was fighting against the other Romans. Men said sorrowfully : "We shall never see peace again. Nay, rather, we shall see fighting perhaps even here in Rome itself. Ah, it will be a happy day if ever the gates of Janus are shut."

Then news came that Cæsar, far away in Africa, had conquered many of his enemies, Africans and Romans. This was a great victory. Cæsar was coming back to Rome, to give thanks to Jupiter for it. "Ah," said the men in Rome, "perhaps if Cæsar could conquer all his enemies peace might be had." But it was not so yet.

Day by day they looked out for Cæsar from the walls. At last Cæsar came back to Rome. Upon every step and every window-ledge in the market-place the people were crowded together to see him come. The centre of the market-place was kept quite clear.

First came the consuls and the old wise men, each in his white robe with a broad purple stripe.

Then came a flat dray, drawn by oxen. Upon

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it, as it went slowly by, you could see swords and helmets, shields with golden patterns and shields with patterns of bronze, coats and cuirasses, long spears and light spears, such as the Africans use. Beside the dray a soldier marched carrying a board on a pole. On this board was painted the word 'Thapsus.' This was the name of the place where Cæsar had conquered his enemies. All the people shouted: "Thapsus! Thapsus!"

Then came another such wagon, and another, and another, past counting.

Then came a dray, pulled slowly by the tugging oxen. Upon it lay long tusks of yellow African ivory, piled like a stack of wood; around stood vessels of clay, packed full of dull yellow dust, African gold. All this wealth Cæsar had brought for the Roman people.

Next came flute-players, playing a song of victory. Padding along came white bulls, with gilded horns, and each with a wreath of roses round his hairy neck. These were a gift to Jupiter from Cæsar. After the bulls came elephants from Africa, holding out their trunks toward the people for fruit. But if you gave them a stone they dropped it, the wise ones! The Romans laughed at them.

Then came many African chiefs, black-skinned and tall, in their barbaric trappings of war; but each man's hands were chained together. These

were the prisoners. Then, alas! came many Romans chained in the same manner. Well they knew that this was their last sight of their city.

And now, with a mighty shout of joy from all the people, Cæsar came, in his chariot. He shone like Jupiter in his golden robe. For on that one day he was allowed to wear a robe just like that of the god. On his head there was a crown of laurel, and above this a slave who stood behind him held a sparkling crown of gold. Every now and then the slave bent and whispered something to Cæsar. No man could hear it but Cæsar.

Octavius rode just behind, full of joy. With shouting and songs, the soldiers tramped after, their swords swinging together as they all moved at once.

Now, at the foot of the hill, the procession stopped. The prisoners were led away by soldiers to a dark prison. Octavius looked at the open doors of the Temple of Janus. He was glad. The slave bent and whispered to Cæsar. What he said was: "Remember that you too are only a man." Then the soldiers came back, wiping their swords. But no one saw the prisoners ever again.

Cæsar went up to the Temple of Jupiter. He crossed the threshold of brass, and knelt down before the statue of Jupiter. On its

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golden knees he laid down his laurel crown. Some men thought the god received it favourably, others unfavourably.

After this Cæsar sent Octavius into the country so that he might read and learn in peace. One night Octavius was called from his bed in the dead of night. All men were running out into the street. "Look!" they said. "Look up!" Octavius saw in the sky a great star with a long shining flame behind it. One said: "This means some strange thing." Another said: "Good or evil?" A third said: "How can any man tell? But surely it means some great and wonderful change for Rome."

Night after night, for seven nights, the star burnt in the sky.

One day in that week there was a hasty knocking at the house of Octavius. A messenger came to Octavius, all worn out with riding and running. "Alas!" he said, "Octavius, I come from Rome." "From my uncle?" said Octavius. "Alas! do you not see my mourning? Cæsar is dead." Then tears came into Octavius's eyes; he lifted his voice in the Roman fashion and cried out: "O Cæsar, farewell, farewell!"

The messenger said: "Even Cæsar's friends joined with his enemies; they all drew their daggers, and struck him down in the Senate House itself. They killed him there, and left his body, and it was brought into the market-

place." Then Octavius said no more to his servants, but only : "Get everything ready, for I am going to Rome."

Many Romans hated Cæsar. For his sake they would gladly have killed Octavius. So for many years Octavius fought and struggled with them. At last he prevailed over most of them. Glad indeed were the Romans to have some peace. So they called him Octavius no more, but now Augustus, or 'the Splendid One'; and they called the eighth month, in which his birthday was, August.

Then Augustus fought with his other enemies. At last no one of them was left to raise any trouble or disturbance. The Roman people had rest ; there was peace throughout all their lands. Not for many generations had this happened.

Then Augustus said : "Now I can do what I have wanted to do for many years past."

He went to the Temple of Janus. At his command men pulled the bronze doors. The hinges creaked and squeaked. No one had moved the doors for more than two hundred years ! And now, with a great clashing noise, the gates were shut. "Now," said Augustus, "at last the god Janus has come home again."

During this peace, while Augustus lived at Rome, Jesus Christ was born in Judea, a land which belonged to the Romans.

II

ONESIMUS

LONG ago, only a little time after Jesus had lived on earth, there stood a little city in the hills. It was called Colossæ. The god of that city was called Father Zeus. In that city dwelt a man called Philemon—that is, ‘the Dear One.’

Philemon was busy all day long. He owned a great flock of sheep, and a great flock of goats. The goats were shaggy, and black and white and brown. They had long beards under their chins. They came trotting and capering up to look at a stranger, and then ran capering away. The sheep had long, heavy fleeces, and these fleeces were very precious, for they were glossy black. Philemon said to his chief shepherd : “If a lamb is born with any white hairs at all, separate him at once. Not on any account must he mingle with the flock, as you value your life.”

The shepherd was a slave. Philemon could do as he liked with him ; he could even have him crucified if he displeased him.

The shepherd said : “The summer has come ; it is time for me to drive the sheep to the upper

pastures. But the flock is so large that I and my dog cannot manage alone. Give me, O my master, a slave to help me." Philemon said: "Take Onesimus." Onesimus means 'the Useful One.' But it would have been better to have called him 'the Useless One'!

Before sunrise the shepherd and Onesimus and the dog drove out the shaggy goats and the black sheep. The dog wore round his neck a collar with a brass label: "I belong to Philemon, and am in charge of the shepherd." The shepherd and Onesimus had collars of iron round their necks. On each was written: "I am the slave of Philemon of Colossæ." The goats scampered about in all directions, as if you had dropped a handful of peas. The sheep went trotting along, baaing and bleating.

The road went up-hill, and the sun got hotter and hotter. Onesimus said: "Shepherd, do let us sit down under those poplars and have a rest. I am so hot." So they sat down and got cool. The sheep and goats nibbled the grass. Onesimus and the shepherd lay about and lolled, even with their legs crossed. Any one could see that they had not been well taught.

Presently another shepherd came up from Colossæ with his flock. They knew him, for he was a slave of a neighbour of Philemon, and

this neighbour was a cruel man. The second shepherd had dreadful scars on his back, and his nose was broken, so he was very ugly. On his forehead was marked 'F.V.R.'—that is, in their language, 'Thief.'

The first shepherd said to him : " Well, do you still think of running away ? " " Yes." " But don't you think you will be caught ? —and then you know what will happen to you ! " said the first shepherd. " Oh," said the second, " I don't mind threats a bit. Whatever happens, I know my master will have me crucified. That happened to my father, and my grandfather, and great-grandfather, and so it will to me." Onesimus knew that the slave's father had been crucified, and so he was very much frightened. " Well," said the first shepherd, " it's a fine thing to be free, certainly." The second shepherd said : " This life is so wretched, I can't bear it any longer—never enough to eat, and punishments all the time ! Give me some of your bread ; I'm so hungry." " Willingly," said the first shepherd, and he gave the man some fresh bread and some figs. Philemon's slaves had plenty to eat, and to spare.

The ugly shepherd went on with his flock. Afterward Onesimus and his shepherd gathered their sheep and goats, and went on too. Uphill went the road. For two whole hours they went climbing up. Presently, clop, clop, clop,

they heard horses' hoofs behind them. A man came riding by as quickly as his horse could go. It was the cruel neighbour, the master of the ugly shepherd. Philemon's shepherd said to Onesimus: "Now I am afraid he is chasing his shepherd to punish him." But when the cruel master overtook his flock he found that the shepherd had run away, and no one knows what became of him.

At last they got to a place where there was a valley, and wells of water, and a hut for the shepherd. There was good grass, and the sheep fed on it.

After a week Philemon sent his chief slave to them. As soon as he had come the shepherd said: "First, please take Onesimus away." "Why?" said the chief slave. "Because he ought not to be called 'the Useful One,' but rather 'the Most Useless of all.' For, first, he will not get up in the morning; secondly, instead of watching the flock he falls asleep, so that wild beasts have stolen three lambs; thirdly, if I tell him to separate the white lambs from the black, he does it as though he didn't know black from white!"

"Come here, Onesimus," said the chief slave. Onesimus came a few inches nearer; he was frightened. "Come," said the slave. Onesimus came an inch nearer. "Come, O Useful One," said the slave. Onesimus came a little half-

inch nearer, for he thought: "Now he will give me a great cuff on the ear." The slave only said, in a quiet voice: "Useless One, for so you should be called, go back to your master's house, and give him this." It was a letter in which he had written: "Onesimus deserves a beating." Not a word more did the chief slave say to Onesimus.

Onesimus could neither read nor write, for he had never been taught. So he did not know what was in the letter. He ran merrily down-hill, as lively as a cricket, thinking: "Now I've got a holiday." Merrily he ran down-hill, and cheerfully he gave the letter to Philemon.

But that evening a slave gave him a great beating; and as he beat him he called out: "Ah, you lazy fellow, that's the way you work for our master, is it?" Poor Onesimus was very stiff and sore, and he was as surprised as anybody ever was, and could not understand how his laziness had became known to Philemon.

* * * * *

One day Philemon said: "Prepare my goat-skins and my wool, for I am going to Ephesus, to sell them to the weavers of wool and to the makers of hair-cloth."

Then the chief slave said to the other slaves: "Come, bustle about; pack the heavy goat-skins in bundles, and the wool in packages;

and one run and drive in the donkeys and the horses from the pasture."

It was hard and heavy work to pack the wool and the hides. But to drive in the donkeys was not hard at all, for they knew the way to their stable, and trotted in of their own accord. Who do you think skipped out to the pasture? Who but Onesimus!

The other slaves came out into the courtyard gasping and wet with heat, under the heavy packages. There came in Onesimus, with the good little donkeys. The other slaves said: "Look there at Master Onesimus! He's as cool as a cucumber." "Well," said one, "birds of a feather flock together," meaning that Onesimus was a donkey. But he was wrong; Onesimus was not like the donkeys, for they worked hard.

Next day Philemon set out at dawn. He rode first. One donkey had one great pack of goatskins on one side, and one great pack upon the other side. The next donkey had a great pack of wool on one side, and a great pack of wool on the other.

At first the road sloped gradually down. But soon it got very steep. The donkeys put their little hoofs quickly and daintily down. Their packs slipped forward on to their necks. But they neither slipped nor stumbled.

At last they came down to a wide valley, with

no trees and no shade, and a river rushing down with reddish waters. High above them on the hill-side they saw the white walls of a city. It was the city where they were going to stay the night. The god of that city was Heracles.

They crossed the river, with its reddish, rushing stream, and climbed up the hill-side. There was something very curious to be seen. On either side of the road the ground was white and shining in the sun like pearls, and water trickled down between the stones.

Onesimus said to his fellow-slave : "What is this ?" The slave said : "The waters are the holy waters from the spring of the god Heracles. Wherever they flow they leave this marble behind them. My father had a farm here before he was sold as a slave ; when he wanted a wall round his field he dug a ditch, and led the water round ; in a few years he had a white wall as high as your hand."

They went up into the town, and Philemon went to the temple. Onesimus carried his cloak, and so he saw a little inside. He saw rows of white marble columns, and in the middle a pool of clear green water. Silver bubbles rose from the bottom, and so the top of the whole pool rippled gently.

"Why does this water do this ?" said he. His fellow-slave answered : "No one knows. Some

say it is the breath of the god Heracles ; others say, spirits he sends to punish people, for if any one in drinking or swimming takes in a bubble he falls into faintness or death. But I don't know." "Who is Heracles ?" said Onesimus. "I don't rightly know, for the gods have nothing to do with slaves. But some say Heracles is a friend to slaves. May he tell our master to give us our freedom."

But as they went away this is what they saw : An old man was sitting on the ground. He said to a fellow who stood by him : "Now, by my magic and by the favour of Heracles, I will make your runaway slave come home again, and you shall capture him." So saying, he stuck a twig upright in the ground. Then he opened a box, and lifted out very carefully a large beetle with a shining bronze body. Then he took out a fine silk thread, and twisted it delicately but firmly between the beetle's waving legs, as it lay on his hand. He fastened the other end of the thread to the stick. Then he set the beetle on the ground. All the time he murmured words which no one could understand. First the beetle turned this way, then that ; then it tried to run straight on, but ever the string pulled it in, and as it ran it wound the thread closer round the stick, and ran in a smaller circle. "Look," said the old man, "so, by the favour of Heracles and by my magic,

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your slave comes closer and closer home, and you will get him at last."

Now Onesimus was quite miserable. He said to himself : " What's the good of running away ? The god Heracles sits here on the hill and sees all that goes on in the valley, and the god of Colossæ sees all that goes on up there. How can one run away and escape from the gods ? "

On the fourth day they came to Ephesus. They came down from the hills, and saw the white city and the blue sea. Before the city, on the left hand, they passed a great temple. Onesimus asked : " What is that ? " A man on the road said : " That is the temple of our goddess Diana. All this city is hers. For she is the most mighty and magical of gods. Great is Diana of Ephesus."

Then Onesimus's heart gave a bound of joy, and he thought : " Then no other god has power here. Diana doesn't know anything about me, so now is my time to escape, while I am on her ground."

* * * *

The next day so it was that Philemon left his slaves at the inn and went to sell his goat-skins to the makers of hair-cloth. The door of the house was in the middle ; on each side were large open windows, with all sorts of things made of hair-cloth—sails, and covers for carts,

and walls and roofs for tents. The goat's hair was too scratchy to be used for garments. Farther back in the rooms sat men at looms making the things. A great smell of the goat-skins came out.

Philemon went in and did his business, and came out, with the man to whom the house belonged. Philemon was asking him : "Who is that man of yours sitting at the loom weaving, in face like a Jew ?" The man said : "He is a Jew from Tarsus, Paul of Tarsus. He has seen very strange things in the land of the Jews. For in a vision he saw one whom he calls Jesus, the Son of God. Now he teaches us all about Jesus ; no one can speak like him." Philemon said : "Can I hear him ?" The man said : "At this moment he is going to speak to the people." Then there came out of the house a man with a flowing beard and big eyes, of a friendly and cheerful appearance ; this was Paul. Philemon was brought to him. Paul liked Philemon well. Philemon heard Paul speak to the people. He heard him say : "God who spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets hath spoken to us by His Son. Therefore we ought to give the more heed to the things which we have heard."

Philemon asked Paul : "Who is this Son of God ?" Paul then began to teach him about Jesus.



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Once on a day the head slave came in from his business. Lo and behold, Onesimus was nowhere to be found! He looked for him in the courtyard, and the stables, and the kitchen. Nowhere was he to be found! Then the landlord said: "He's packed up some goods and taken to his heels, I'm sure!" And so it was. The host said: "It's true, the saying, 'A master has as many enemies as he has slaves.' Now Philemon may crucify the lot of you, or at least give you all a great beating!" All the slaves were greatly troubled. But the chief slave said: "Well, even in this miserable state we must be faithful to our master. After all, we are guiltless, and it's proper for a servant that's innocent to be full of confidence, especially before his master."

So when Philemon came back the chief slave told him openly all about it. Philemon said: "If Onesimus is caught, or comes back, he must be punished, but not with death. As for you all, I give you no punishment, for you are not guilty." Then all the slaves scarcely knew what to do for joy.

Philemon went back to Colossæ. He told many people there about Jesus and about Paul. Every week they came to his house to hear and to pray.

For two years, at the time of wool-selling, Philemon went down to Ephesus, and saw

Paul and heard him with joy. Then Paul journeyed into the Holy Land, to Philemon's great sorrow.

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Many years later, there arrived in Rome a band of prisoners brought from beyond the seas to be tried before the Emperor himself. One of them was Paul. The Jews accused him of having taught against the law of Rome. If he were found guilty, he would certainly be put to death.

First he was brought before a judge. He commanded him to find a house for himself, and to live there. "But," said the judge, "you must be guarded by soldiers all the time. So call in the blacksmith, and let him make your chains fast."

The blacksmith fastened an iron cuff round Paul's right wrist. From it there hung a light chain; at the end was another iron cuff that opened and shut. Then the judge called a Roman soldier, and he fastened this second cuff on his left wrist, saying: "For the present I give this prisoner into your keeping." The soldier said: "I will keep him safely." The judge said: "Give him all reasonable freedom."

Paul went away with his friends. On his right hand marched the soldier, his sword swinging between him and Paul. They came

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down from the hill of the palace. The yellow Tiber flowed in front of them. A broad bridge went across. On the opposite bank the ground was swampy. There were a few houses there. In these most of the Jews lived, and there Paul took up his dwelling.

One day there came to Paul in his house a man called Epaphras. He came from Colossæ. Paul asked : "How are the brethren in Colossæ ?" Epaphras said : "They have sent me to ask you many things concerning Jesus." Paul said : "Stay here with me for a time, and I will write a long letter and answer all their questions."

As soon as he had time, Paul and the soldier chained to him went into his upper room. Paul sat at his table and wrote. The soldier sat close by. Then the chain that was between them did not trouble Paul much as he wrote.

Epaphras returned one day out of the city, across the bridge. He brought back with him, out of kindness, a man who had begged from him. I cannot tell you how wretched this creature was, nor how torn and tattered the garments he had on. Never was such a dirty and hungry person seen. Epaphras opened the door, and the poor man came in, and cast himself down at Paul's feet, and said : "I was a slave and I ran away from my master, and I have never prospered since, and I would rather

die than continue as I am." Paul said : "Stand up and take courage, for I too am a slave." He meant that he was the slave or servant of Jesus. The man said : "Sir, I have heard that you have good news for the poor, and because I knew Epaphras long ago in my master's house at Colossæ, I begged of him, and now I beg you to have pity on me." Paul said : "What are you called ?" He answered : "Onesimus."

Paul kept Onesimus in his house and began to teach him about Jesus. He saw that the slave wanted to do good, and not evil. Onesimus did all the hardest work for the household willingly.

When Paul wrote in his letter to the men of Colossæ, "Bondsmen, obey your earthly masters, and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily. Masters, deal rightly and justly with your bondsmen, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven," he thought of Philemon and Onesimus. When at the end he wrote his name, "Paul," and the soldier moved, the chain was pulled, and the name was badly written. Paul smiled and added at the end of his letter : "Remember my chains."

After some time Paul said to Onesimus : "Son, it is wrong that you should stay away from your master." Onesimus said : "I will go back to him if you think I ought." Again Paul said : "Son, it is not right that Philemon should suffer the loss of the goods you stole." Onesimus

said : "I would willingly repay, but what can I do? I have no money." The soldier said to Paul : "What! will you send him back to his master? I wouldn't go! He'll be crucified, for certain." Paul said: "Friend, sit down again, for I must write to his master." So he took up his pen and wrote :

"Paul to Philemon, our beloved friend.

"I thank my God in my prayers, hearing of thy faith and love. Though I might boldly command thee to do that which is fitting, yet, for love's sake, I rather beseech thee as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner. I beseech thee for my son, Onesimus, who formerly was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable both to thee and to me; whom I have sent back to thee, but do thou receive him as my own flesh and blood. Whatsoever he owes thee, reckon it to my account. I will repay it."

Paul sent Onesimus with this letter, together with another man bearing the letter to the men of Colossæ. So Onesimus left Paul. They passed over the sea, and through Ephesus, and up the valley beside the red river, and at last they came to Colossæ, and to the house of Philemon. And they entered into the house.

We do not know what Philemon did when he saw Onesimus and the letter, but very certain it is that he forgave Onesimus, and loved him well ever after.

Nor do we know whether master and slave saw Paul again. Perhaps they did. For Paul was released by the order of the Emperor and came to Ephesus again for a little while. But after four years the Emperor decided that Christians were bad, and must be punished. And so Paul was captured in Rome, and judged. Afterward the soldiers led him outside the walls, and there they killed him, beside a spring of water, under a pine-tree.

III

TRAJAN

AUGUSTUS CÆSAR was so wise that the Romans were better off than they had ever been. No poor women were obliged to go away from the market because they could not pay for corn, as Tiberius Gracchus had seen them do. No armies came to besiege Rome, as Hannibal and wicked Tarquin had done.

So the Romans called Augustus Cæsar their Emperor, and were glad to be ruled by him.

Nearly a hundred years after Augustus died Trajan was Emperor of the Romans. Trajan was strong and tall. The skin of his face was red and sunburnt, even down to his neck, for he went out in all weathers, and his soldier's leather coat did not cover his neck.

He did not live in Rome. Rome had conquered many countries by now. On all her borders there were camps, and in the camps were soldiers, for beyond the borders lived wild tribes in the dark forests. So the soldiers guarded the borders.

Trajan went from one of these camps to

another. One day, as he sat in his tent, a messenger rode up and hastily saluted him. He bore a letter from Trajan's chief generals and rulers at Rome. In this they wrote that a wild tribe had broken through the border of one of the provinces, and had burnt villages, and had killed people who lived under the Roman rule.

Trajan sent his messengers to his armies. Soon he was voyaging down the great river that ran into the country where the wild tribe, the Dacians, had broken in. He sat in a boat rowed by ten men, while his soldiers marched along the roads. These roads were paved with stones. They ran straight up hill and down dale until they came to a Roman town on the great river.

When Trajan came out of his boat all the people ran out to meet him. They had crowns of leaves on their heads, and clapped their hands for joy. But when the soldiers, drawn up in their ranks, saw Trajan, they shouted : "Hail, Emperor! Hail, Trajan!"

One of the regiments was called 'the Helper,' another, 'the Wise One.' Some of the old soldiers had fought for Trajan before. They said to the younger ones : "When we were encamped in another province, we have seen the Emperor come out and join our games, and throw his lance farther than any of ours."

Trajan went on to the walls of the city and looked across the river. Beyond he saw flat land, and beyond that hills. The men of the town who were with him said : "From those hills, O Emperor, the Dacians came." Trajan said : "Who is the chief man among them ? Where is their chief village ?" "Their chief is called Decebalus, and he is a mighty fighter, and a mighty leader ; he lives in their chief village, and it is called Sarningetusa." Then said Trajan : "I see no villages and no roads. Is any way known to that place ?" They told him that no one among them knew the Dacian land, but that there were no roads—nothing but oak forests and quick mountain streams, and that the Dacians were very fierce and cruel. Then all came down from the walls.

Trajan called his officers and said to them : "Command your men to build a bridge over the great river."

Then some soldiers took boats and tied them together, bow to bow, and stern to stern. Others hewed down oak-trees, and drove a great post into the bank, and another out in the stream. They tied the end of the boats to the post on the bank. Then they thrust the boats out into the stream, and tied them to the post in the water. So they went on right across the stream, and the last boat was bound firmly to a great oak post on the farther bank. Then they laid

planks across the boats, so that men and horses could pass. All the time they had made a great noise hammering at the posts and singing their old songs.

Next day Trajan and his men marched across the bridge. First came the light-armed soldiers on horses. Clop, clop, went their horses over the bridge. Then came an officer, marching at the head of his regiment. Behind him came four standard-bearers ; one carried the eagle standard. Behind them came four trumpeters, blowing a tune. The soldiers behind kept time as they marched.

The opposite bank of the river was very steep. Trajan saw that there was no road beyond, but only a track. He told his officers that they must not hurry forward in the Dacian land, but must leave a way so that they could get back again.

After marching for three days the Romans entered a dark wood of oak-trees, and the track disappeared.

Then Trajan pulled up his horse and said to the officers : "Halt your men and cause a road to be made." Each man took off his helmet, and laid it, with his sword, spear, and shield, against a tree. Some took their axes and cut down the trees ; others collected stones in baskets and spread them ; others took great mallets and beat the stones into the track.

Trajan got off his horse and walked up and down. Sometimes he said to a soldier : "Lay that tree-trunk here, to fill up this hole." Sometimes he rode along the road, and saw how it was getting better and better. Oftenest he rode to the front, and sat on a little stool under the trees.

His scouts came back one by one. One said : "Hail, O Emperor ! I have ridden three hours ahead, and I have seen nothing." Another said : "I have ridden as far as the next stream, and on its banks I saw in the mud many footprints, but they all faced away from us."

* * * * *

After many days' work the soldiers came out of the forest and formed a camp.

Trajan ordered that the army should prepare itself to make a solemn sacrifice to the great god of the Romans, Jupiter the Thunderer.

The soldiers sought out among the animals belonging to the army a young white bull which had never worked, a young ram, and a great pig. The horns of the bull and of the ram were gilded, and a wreath of ivy and daffodils from the woods put round their necks. The trumpeters, crowned with oak leaves, walked in front, blowing their long trumpets. Next came a boy, leading the pig by a cord ; a young soldier led the ram, and an old soldier led the bull. Over

his shoulder this old man carried an axe. Three times they marched round the camp.

Then Trajan went to the altar outside his tent. A fire was burning on the altar. He put a fold of his robe over his head and said a prayer. Then he turned to a boy standing beside him and took from a box some grains of salt. He sprinkled them on the head of the bull. The bull stooped down its head toward the altar. Trajan thought this was a favourable sign from the gods. Then the old soldier led the ox aside and slew it with his axe.

Trajan poured some wine on to the fire. It hissed and went down, but then it shot up again. So, a second time, the gods gave a favourable sign.

After this the army marched on for many days. At last scouts came galloping back, and ran to Trajan, and hailed him, and said : "As we rode forward arrows were shot at us, and one of our men was hit. We heard Dacians shouting, and we saw them moving, but we could not get at them because the wood was so thick."

While they were speaking there was shouting in the camp. An officer came running up and said : "My lord, my lord, a prisoner has been brought in." Trajan said : "Bring him to me." And he stood at the door of the tent. There came a Roman soldier holding a Dacian prisoner

by his long hair. The prisoner's hands were tied behind him. He was a big, strong man, in a rough grey cloak and vest and trousers. The Roman soldier pushed him down, kneeling. Trajan looked down at him and said: "Do you know Decebalus, the King?" The prisoner said: "Yes." "Where is he?" "I do not know." "How many men were with you?" "I do not know." "If you will tell me," said Trajan, "your life shall be spared." "I do not know," repeated the prisoner. "Take him away," said Trajan. "If he has anything to say before we march forward, bring him to me. If not, deal with him according to our law."

Far within the forest Decebalus had gathered together all the Dacian men in his village, Sarningetusa. Decebalus was tall and strong. He was a mighty fighter and a mighty leader. He had never been beaten in battle.

The Dacian men sat on the ground and listened to the chiefs. One chief said: "Let us go forward all together and fight the Romans." Another said: "Let us hide in the forest and surprise them as they go along." But another said: "You cannot—their scouts ride before and beside them."

Decebalus said: "There is a place where the valley is very narrow, and the stream runs through. Let us send our young men, and they shall build a wooden wall there, on each side of the stream. They shall plant my standard, the

War Dragon, there, and by no means stir outside until the Romans come. Then they shall shoot them down with their arrows."

Then all the Dacians shouted out : " Hear him ! Hear him ! " They all agreed to this plan, and promised to do exactly as Decebalus had said.

Four chiefs led the young men forward to the place. Soon the wall was built.

Then one chief said : " Let us not sit behind the wall like old women, but go forth bravely and meet the Romans." So they left the wall.

Presently they heard the Roman trumpet calls. Then they crept forward and saw the Roman camp. Then every Dacian laid his arrow on the bow-string, and aimed at a Roman soldier, and pulled the string back. The arrows flew out of the wood.

The Roman soldiers drew their swords and rushed on the Dacians. Trajan heard the noise in his tent. He came out of the camp with his officers and stood on a little hillock. He said to one : " Go to the chief officer of the light-armed troops and tell him to lead out another regiment." Then the second regiment rushed into the battle.

The sky grew dark, and the thunder rolled. The wind blew from behind the Roman camp and carried the rain into the eyes of the Dacians.

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Trajan loved the rain and the thunder. He thought Jupiter the Thunderer was fighting for the Romans.

Presently one of the light-armed soldiers ran back out of the battle. He held up to Trajan the head of the Dacian chief, and shouted out : "Victory, O Trajan ! Victory!"

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Quickly the poor, defeated Dacians hurried back over the hills. There were not enough of them now to defend the wooden wall.

Some went to Decebalus. Others were ashamed. They went back sadly to their own villages. Every one ran out to meet them, men, women, and children. They told them : "The Roman army is coming ; we have not stopped them."

In one village the chief said : "Then let all the men go to Decebalus, and let them take their bows and arrows, and swords and shields. You, O women, take the children and the cattle and go farther up into the mountains to our caves of refuge." The women said : "We will go, but we cannot drive all the cattle with us ; let us take the best only." Then the chiefs said : "Alas ! since it must be so, we will kill all the old cattle and horses, so that when the Romans come they find nothing." And so they did. Then the women went up into the hills, and the

men marched off to Decebalus. As they went they sang :

“Wolves of the Dacians,
Come at our calling :
For the fierce feast
Scatter your she-wolves,
Scatter your cublings
Into the caves.
Forth from the forest,
Forth from the oak-trees,
Wolves of the Dacians
Spring on your foe !”

Now the winter was coming. The oak-trees were all bare. Trajan caused the soldiers to make roads and to build camps. There they stayed in the winter weather.

One day some Roman soldiers rode through the forest. They saw twelve Dacian women hurrying along a road through the wood. Little children and some boys and girls ran along with them.

The soldiers rode quickly and came round them and so took them prisoners. The poor Dacian women were very much frightened, for they themselves were cruel to prisoners. Some of them cried. One said : “Alas ! alas ! what will become of us ? Now our lives will be short and miserable !” But one of them, a chief’s wife, said : “ You must not cry. Your husbands would be ashamed of you.” She was carrying her own little baby.

When they came to the Roman camp Trajan

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ordered the Dacian women to be brought before him. He came out of his tent, playing with a ring in his fingers. He said to all the women : “ What revenge is due for the men of ours whom you have killed among you ? ” They were all downcast, and dared not answer. But the chief’s wife said : “ A brave man who is taken prisoner only expects to be killed.’ This was the custom of the Dacians. Trajan said : “ Who are you with the quick and wise tongue ? ” “ I am the wife of the chief.” Trajan said : “ Is there any other woman here the wife of a chief ? ” They said : “ No.” He said to the chief’s wife : “ Stand aside,” and then, turning to his officer : “ Take these women to the Dacian lands which we have already conquered. See that they have houses and food, and something whereby they and their children can live.”

The Dacian women could hardly understand, but they were very glad.

Then Trajan spoke to the chief’s wife. “ As for you, because you are the chief’s wife, and because that is his son in your arms, I shall send you to Rome.” He held out his ring to the officer, to take as a sign to all other officers right along the road to Rome.

Then all the women wept and wailed. They held up their children to say good-bye to the chief’s wife. She held up her little boy, and often she turned her head round and called

out : " Farewell ! Farewell !" to her Dacian people.

The Romans defeated the Dacians in many battles. Trajan came nearer and nearer to Sarningetusa. Decebalus saw that his men were hard pressed. He thought in great trouble what he could do. He sent for two of his friends and said to them : " Go, find Trajan's camp ; tell the officers that you come unarmed and peaceful. See Trajan face to face. Tell him that I am a king, even as he is, and that it would be no shame either to him or to me to meet. Then perhaps we might make peace together."

The envoys went. Within seven days they came back. They said to Decebalus : " We have seen Trajan. Certainly he is a mighty leader, and a mighty fighter. He will not do as you wish."

Trajan's answer was that he would not speak of peace unless the Dacian people would submit first. But Decebalus would not.

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Then Trajan ordered his army to march forward to attack Sarningetusa.

As they marched through the wood, the trumpeters no longer blew their tunes, for they were too near the enemy. As they marched, suddenly a great grey wolf sprang out of the bushes into the track. It snuffed toward the advancing men. Then it turned and trotted

ahead. Again it turned and snuffed. Then it turned and trotted ahead. Three times it turned. Then it fled away on its silent feet, and was gone in a minute.

One soldier said to his neighbours : "Friends, have you not heard of our fathers, Romulus and Remus, and of the great grey wolf that snuffed at Remus's hand ? Our father Romulus has sent us his beast to encourage us."

Trajan said to his officers : "Is not this sign favourable ?" A soothsayer was there who could tell what signs of animals and birds were favourable. He said to Trajan : "O Emperor, the gods hide much from us. But this I say : in a little time come three days, and in those three days this army shall do great deeds. But whether the end shall be good or bad, I cannot say."

Within a day or two after that their camp was on a hill. Trajan stood outside his tent. He saw a great eagle fly up from the wood. It flew round and round over the camp. Then it flew up and away and out of sight.

Trajan said to his officers : "Let the soothsayer tell us what this means." The soothsayer said : "It means that to-day is the first of those three days." Then Trajan grew very thoughtful. The officers stood silently round. Then there came a scout, running up the hill. He cried : "Hail, O Emperor ! I, even I, stood on a hill-

top, and saw a valley bare of trees, and in it a fort, with a wooden wall round it, and in it a great number of Dacians, more than ten regiments."

Trajan said to his officers: "Let the light-armed soldiers be held ready for battle. Let the heavily armed soldiers take their axes, and cut down branches, and make faggots, and place them in rows along the hill, to serve as a wall. Send scouts out, the lightest of foot, so that they can run swiftly in the wood, where the horses cannot go."

Then the soldiers took their axes and went into the wood. The branches came crashing down. Each man made his great bundle, as much as he could carry uphill.

The light-armed soldiers stood in their ranks. The men of the second rank carried bags of stones for their slings. The men of the third rank tugged at the strings of their bows, lest a rotten string should snap when the bow was drawn back.

Then came a scout running. He said: "Hail, O Emperor! The Dacians are within an hour's march, and come on fast." A little after another scout came running. He said, panting: "Hail, O Emperor! I have but just escaped capture. The Dacians come swiftly." The Emperor said: "Let all men take their places."

Presently voices and feet running were

heard in the wood. Then there burst forth a whizzing flight of arrows. Then the Dacians leapt out of the wood. Both sides joined battle. The arrows and the stones fell as thick as a shower of rain. Each man of the Dacians fought like a brave man. But the Romans kept their ranks and bore them back. Once the Dacians pressed the Romans back, even to the logs. But the Romans kept their ranks and drove them down the hill.

At length the Romans pressed the Dacians even into the wood. Then the Dacians turned and fought as bravely as lions. But still the ranks of the Romans bore them back. At last, one by one, the Dacians hurried away through the forest.

As Trajan went from the battle he saw the soothsayer, and he said to him : "Is this thy first day, O bringer of good hope?" The soothsayer said : "This is the first day, O Emperor. There come yet two. Who knows how the end will be except the gods?"

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The next day Trajan ordered his men to go forward, prepared for battle.

At midday they came to the place where the scout had been. They saw the fort. It was full of Decebalus's men, ready to shoot on them with arrows. The arrows flew fast. At last a

company lifted their shields above their heads so that no arrows could fall on them. So they ran into the fort. Then the Dacians were forced to flee.

As the Dacians fled through the forest they heard a mighty voice shouting: "Wolves of the Dacians, this way, this way!" They knew it was the voice of the mighty Decebalus. They ran toward him and found him.

He led them on and on through the forest. At nightfall they came to a little fort on a hill. They threw themselves down inside the stockade. For weariness and sorrow, no one spoke.

At last a chief groaned and said: "O Decebalus, now on two days have we fought twice with the Romans, and twice, alas! have been defeated. Our men melt away like the snow in spring. To-morrow, if we fight for the third time and if we are defeated again, the Dacian race will vanish utterly, as the snow vanishes in the summer. Were it not better to make peace?"

Then Decebalus rose up, a head above all the others. He said: "It is true that we have fought twice with the Romans, and twice, alas! have been defeated. But now let us fight once again. The gods give good fortune to the third time. If now we prosper, we will plant three oak groves, and thrice every year will we sacrifice three victims to the gods, in memory of

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the day. But as for you, men of the Dacians, let us rather fight as becomes us." And Decebalus prevailed over the others.

Meantime Trajan had entered the captured fort. Within it he found an eagle standard which the Dacians had captured from the Romans. "Ha!" said he. "This is the eagle which I saw fly up the other day. Master Soothsayer, here is your eagle come home again." The officers said: "This is surely a good sign." "Softly, softly," said the soothsayer. "I cannot tell whether it is a sign of victory, or whether it means that the Roman eagle shall be driven back upon the third day. We ought to sacrifice to know the truth."

But they all knew that Roman soldiers could not offer sacrifice in the midst of the war, for they were not pure of the shedding of blood. So the soothsayer said: "From dawn I will watch the flight of the birds, O Emperor, if haply the gods may send us a sign." "Be it so," said Trajan.

An hour after dawn Trajan came forth from his tent, clad in his soldier's leather coat. He said to the soothsayer: "What hast thou seen, O soothsayer?" "Nothing, O Trajan. Not a bird has risen from the wood." Then said Trajan: "This is the third day; to-day the gods give the victory to one side or the other,

but now I see that they keep secret which way victory shall go."

The Roman horsemen trotted forward. Before noonday they reached the fort. They rode round it, but they could not take it. Then the Roman foot soldiers marched out of the wood.

They attacked the fort boldly, but they could not take it. Then they drew back, out of the way of the Dacian arrows.

And now the sun was setting.

Then the Roman soldiers cried out to one another: "For the third time, brothers!"

Some kindled fire, others tore down dry branches. They ran, two together, one covering the other with his shield, the other bearing a torch. So they set fire to the stockade. The wind blew from behind the Romans, and blew the flame in the faces of the Dacians.

Then Decebalus gathered faithful chiefs and the bravest warriors. All together, each man covering himself with his shield, they burst forth. So mighty were they that no man, not even the bravest of the Romans, could stop them. So they reached the forest, and the sun set and night came on.

Trajan then pressed into the fort. He said to the soothsayer: "This, then, is the end of thy third day." "Truly, O Emperor," said the soothsayer, "the gods have given thee the

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victory. But to Decebalus they have given his own life and those of his friends."

After this none of the Dacians opposed Trajan and his army any more. And Decebalus sent messengers to Trajan, saying: "Now, O King, will I make peace, because I *must*, not because I *will*."

Then Trajan sent back messengers saying that he would make peace, if Decebalus and his people would give up the Romans whom they had captured, and if they would give up their own weapons.

Moreover, he sent to Decebalus to say that Decebalus must submit, and come and kneel down on both knees and swear peace in the Roman fashion.

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After many days Decebalus and all his chiefs and men came to the camp of Trajan. With them they brought the Roman prisoners and the Roman eagle standard which they had taken. These prisoners were joyful. They sang as they came, pointing to the Roman standard :

"O Eagle, our strong Eagle,
Who guardest the lands of Rome,
Thy claws have torn the Dacian wolves,
And now thou turnest home."

Then came the Dacians. Last came Decebalus. Decebalus said in his heart : "If Trajan asks me

to kneel down before him, and puts me to shame before these my chiefs and my people, then will I slay myself in that place, rather than be put to open shame."

There sat Trajan on a stone place raised above the ground. He said: "Who are these in front?" And they said: "The chiefs." He said: "Let them kneel down." Then he said: "And who are the next?" "They are men of the Dacians." "Let them kneel down, and let each man lay down his shield and his sword." So they did, and Roman officers passed along the lines and gathered in the swords and shields. Many men of the Dacians sighed heavily for sorrow when their good swords were taken away from them.

Last came Decebalus, and he stood at the back, beyond the ranks of the people. Trajan looked and saw him. He said to his officers: "Look at yonder man. If ever I saw a goodly man, and a mighty leader, that is he. Let him stand where he is, for that is Decebalus."

Then one of the Dacian chiefs, full of fear, crept forward on his knees, and crawled to Trajan's throne, and began to call out: "O King, O great King, have mercy on us! Let us be friends and brothers of the Romans!"

But Trajan took no notice of him, and looked always at Decebalus. And Decebalus looked at him, and he thought: "That is a goodly soldier

and a mighty leader. I would I sat on his throne, and he before me."

All this time Trajan gave no order at all to Decebalus. He said: "Let my Romans come forward, and do you count them and see that all are there." Then the Roman prisoners came forward, joyfully, in order. As each came he said: "Hail, O Emperor! The gods preserve thee!" The full number was there.

The Dacians looked on silent and sad. Then Trajan said: "O Dacians, every man must swear to keep peace, and each of your chiefs must make submission to me. And first my officers must examine you to see that your arms are all given up. In two hours' time you shall give me your oaths." And then he stood up, and whispered to one of his officers, and to the other officers he said: "Lead the Dacians away." Then Trajan went to his tent.

The one officer went to Decebalus, took him courteously by the hand, and led him to Trajan's tent. Trajan was sitting upon his stool. Decebalus stood before him. Trajan said: "O Decebalus—for I know that you are he—the gods have given me the victory, but to you they have given your own life and that of your friends.

"It is not fitting that a king should be put to shame before his people. Therefore I have

sent for you, and I now command you to kneel down and give me your submission."

Then Decebalus said : "Hadst thou asked for it otherwise, O King, either thou or I had perished." Then at once he kneeled down, and with a sorrowful countenance he swore to Trajan by his gods that he would not fight against the Roman people as long as grass grew green, or water ran.

The next day, accordingly, the Dacian men were brought forward before the camp. Trajan sat upon his high seat. Decebalus stood in front of the Dacians. Near by was an altar. A soldier held a pig in readiness beside it.

Then one of Trajan's officers stepped forward and said : "Dost thou, O Emperor, order me to make a treaty with the Dacian people ?" Trajan answered : "Yes." "O Emperor, I ask for the best vervain from thee." Trajan answered in the proper words : "Take it pure." Then the officer fetched it. This was the old, holy way.

The officer went across to Decebalus, and touched his hair and his beard with the stalks of vervain.

Then Decebalus said : "I agree to the treaty, as it is written on these tablets of wax." Then the Roman took a flint stone in one hand, and took the cord by which the pig was tied in the other. He said : "Hear, O Jupiter, and you, O Decebalus, and ye, O people of the Dacians.

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From this peace the Roman people will not depart; if they shall, do thou, O Jupiter, strike the Roman people that day as I here this day strike this swine." So saying, he struck down the swine.

Thus the peace was made.

Of Decebalus the story tells, further, how his people broke the peace, and how he fought again against the Romans, and how his chiefs accepted death rather than capture; and, last, how Decebalus was found by the Romans, dead, under an oak-tree in the forest.

But Trajan ruled long, and prospered greatly.

IV

PLINY

AT the time when Trajan was a little baby there lived a Roman gentleman and his wife in a country place five or six days' journey from Rome. Their house stood by a lake, under a hill-side. You could look down from the windows into the clear water of the lake and see the fishes swimming about. The hill-side was covered with vineyards. Anemones and narcissus grew wild in the grass in the spring.

The lady had a little son. Her husband called his son Pliny, after his brother. The baby grew fat and flourishing, and began to talk, and to crawl about and pick the wild flowers. But then his father died.

Then there came from Rome Pliny the Elder, the little Pliny's uncle. He came to comfort Pliny's mother. He said: "Now you must come to Rome to live with me, and I will look after your little boy."

So little Pliny grew up in his uncle's big house in Rome. Every day they all did the same things. Before dawn the elder Pliny got into

a carrying-chair and was carried by his slaves to the palace of the Emperor. All the way he read a book. Then he went into the Emperor's room, while outside the sun was rising and all the birds were beginning to sing. The slaves outside the door heard their voices, talking over business, all the morning.

At midday little Pliny was waiting on the steps of the house for his uncle. For he admired and loved him more than any one else. The chair came in sight. Pliny the Elder came out of his chair ; he took notice of little Pliny, and said : "Where have you been this morning ? Have you been running and racing ?" "No ; I have been into the city to my school." "What ?" said Pliny the Elder. "And did you walk ?" "Yes." "But if you had taken a chair you could have had your books with you ! You need not lose those minutes."

Then Pliny the Elder said : "I want my reader and my writer." Two slaves ran forward. All Pliny's slaves were fond of him. One of these two had a very beautiful, clear voice ; he was therefore the reader. The other could write very fast ; he was therefore the writer. In winter he wore warm woolly gloves, so that his fingers should not be numb.

They all went in to dinner. The reader sat by Pliny and read aloud. By chance he said 'brave' instead of 'bravely' in one place.

"Stop! Stop!" cried one of the diners. "Now go back and read that sentence over again." The slave did so. Pliny the Elder said: "Surely you understood the meaning?" "Why, yes!" "Why did you make him go back again, then? We have lost more than ten lines by this interruption!"

Presently the reader came to a wise saying of Cæsar's. "Put that down for me," said Pliny to the writer. Quickly his stylus flew over his tablets in his quick brown fingers. At last they got up from dinner. Pliny the Elder and his slaves went to sit in the sun, and to go on with the book. Little Pliny ran off with his friends to ride, or to swim, or to play.

When Pliny was seventeen he put on the long white cloak worn by the Roman men. His uncle said: "After you have served your time in the army you shall do as I did; you shall become a lawyer." He decided, however, that they should go for that summer to Misenum, a seaside place where he had a beautiful house and garden. This plan fitted very well, because the Emperor had ordered him to take command of his fleet of ships which lay at Misenum.

The house stood close by the sea. A little jetty ran out from the garden into the sea. The waves came sparkling upon the sand, almost up to the violet beds in the garden.

In the bay lay the ships. Each ship had a

great white sail. Along her sides were two rows of oar-holes, each with a great oar in it. On benches within sat men to row the vessel, two to each oar. These men were slaves, and lived miserably in the ship.

From the house Pliny and his mother could see the curving shore of the bay, the mountains of curious shape that rose on the other side, and the white buildings of the town of Pompeii, six miles away.

* * * * *

Day after day the sun shone fine and warm. Pliny bathed, and lay and read in the garden and on the shore. One day in August the elder Pliny told his nephew to copy a part out of a book for him. The sun was very hot, so he went into a cool marble room, and worked there until midday. Then, after dinner, he and his uncle took up their books again. Just as they did so Pliny's mother came in and said: "Have you seen the strange cloud rising over the mountains? It's so strange, you should look."

Pliny the Elder rose and looked out of the window over the sea. Then he went to the rising ground behind the house. He saw, above the mountains, a cloud rising up, as straight as a tree-trunk, spreading at the top, like the branches of a tree. The top part was bright in places, and in places dark and spotted.

Pliny was very much interested, for such a thing had never been seen before. He said to his nephew : "Order my rowing-boat ; I shall go toward Pompeii. Will you come with me ?" Pliny said : "No, thank you. I want to finish the copying you asked me to do." A friend who was staying there also said he would remain at home.

While they were on the jetty, seeing Pliny off, a little boat came quickly, cleaving the water. A man stood up in it and hailed them, and leapt on to the jetty, and gave the elder Pliny a letter. It came from a lady who lived right beyond Pompeii, nearer the mountains. She said : "Come and save us, by the sea, because we cannot escape by the land."

Pliny ordered one of his large ships to be prepared, and told the rowers to row with all speed.

As they sped along a very strange thing happened. Things began to fall on the deck. They were hot cinders, and crumbling little pieces of hot stone. Presently there came little fiery, burning flakes. They blew on a hot wind from the mountain. The cloud was growing bigger, and coming down on them. It grew dark.

The pilot said to Pliny : "Shall I turn the ship ?" Pliny saw that he could not reach the lady. But he had a friend in another part of

the coast, nearer Pompeii. So he answered : "No. Fortune favours the brave," and he ordered the pilot to take the ship into that part of the coast.

When the ship came to land the friends came running down, greatly pleased that Pliny had come. It was now nearly dark, although it was still the afternoon. Pliny said : "We must not be frightened ; that will not help. Let us go and rest now, and to-morrow we will go." He went to sleep. But his friends were too frightened. Broad flames shone from the mountain. They made the room quite light, now and again. The friends sat up and listened to the cinders falling and falling and falling.

Presently the little courtyard outside Pliny's room was a foot deep in ashes, like deep snow. The friends said : "If we do not go now, we shall never be able to. Wake Pliny and let us go." So they sent a slave to waken Pliny. Then they all talked about how they could protect their heads from the hot ashes. All they could think of was to tie pillows on their heads with handkerchiefs. So they set out, wading through the ashes like deep snow. They could see other people bearing torches in the darkness, for it was quite dark, although the day-time had come again.

In great distress they waded down to the shore to embark. But the waves came racing

to shore so high and boisterous that they could not see the ships at all. As they stood there, with the torches blowing about, there came a wind so poisonous that each one turned and fled away by himself in the darkness.

Meantime, at home, at Pliny's house by the sea, young Pliny and his mother and the friend went back to the house. They enjoyed the afternoon, although they still saw the strange cloud undiminished.

In the middle of the night Pliny was awakened suddenly. His bed was shaking. He leapt up to warn his mother, when she came hurrying in, crying out: "Get up! Get up! The whole house is being shaken down!"

Pliny snatched up his book and said: "Come out into the courtyard." So they all sat there. Pliny tried to read. But the ground shivered, and the walls seemed about to crack. It began to grow light. Pliny rolled up his book and said to the steward: "Have the horses harnessed, and send the chariots after us along the road." Pliny and his mother and the friend walked into the lane. There they saw many other people hastening along. They could hear them coming behind, weeping and lamenting.

At last they stopped by the roadside, and the chariots overtook them. The poor horses shivered and trembled with fear. The earth began to quake again. The wheels slipped

backward and forward. The slaves put stones under the wheels, but it was no use at all.

Now the friend said to Pliny's mother : " Why don't you escape as fast as you can ? If your brother is safe he will wish you to be safe. If he is dead, it was his desire certainly that you both should live. So why don't you run away as fast as you can ? " But Pliny's mother said : " We can't think about our own safety while we are not sure if he is alive or dead." The friend said : " Well, I shall go." So he ran off, and they saw him no more.

Then a great dark cloud covered the whole sky, and the faint daylight vanished altogether. Pliny's mother said : " Now, my son, I insist upon it that you go ; go as fast as you can, for you are young. As for me, I am too old and too fat to try, but I don't mind dying as long as I know you are safe." Pliny said : " No." She said ; " But I command you to go." Then Pliny seized hold of her hand and said ; " Now, mother, you have got to come with me, and you must do your best." A slight rain of ashes began to fall on them, through the dark, and a dark fog came blowing up from behind. Pliny's mother walked as fast as she could. Tears were in her eyes, because she thought Pliny could go so much faster alone.

Pliny said to her : " Let us turn out of the highroad while we can still see, for if we fell

the crowd might trample us to death in the dark." So they turned through a gate and sat down on the grass. Then came a darkness like that in a room when all the lights are put out and the blinds drawn. Beyond the wall they heard the trampling of feet, and people moving. Voices cried out. A woman called out to her child : "Where are you ? Where are you ?" Another called her husband. Then were heard many people lamenting and weeping, and some calling upon the gods, and a voice calling out : "The town is all burnt down !" and another saying : "Would that I were dead !"

This went on and on for a long time. Pliny and his mother no longer knew if it were night or day. Thin, powdery ash kept on falling softly.

At last the darkness turned paler and fainter. They could see the wall of the field and the people passing. Presently the sun, a red ball, shone out. Everything was grey with ash. Pliny's eyes hurt and smarted. He and his mother got up, and plodded back along the road. Every one else was going the other way.

Strange indeed the house looked to them when they got back. Nothing was damaged, but everything was several inches deep in ash.

Little by little the slaves cleared the rooms. They rested that night, and waited for news of Pliny the Elder. After three days the ash had

quite ceased to fall, and the ground stood firm, and everything was safe and ordinary again. Then at last they heard news of Pliny the Elder. A man had found him upon the shore, lying sleeping, he thought, at the place where the poisonous wind had blown. But, going nearer, he saw that Pliny was not asleep, but dead.

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Many years afterward Pliny had become a great lawyer in Rome. One day he was speaking before many people in the Law Courts and Trajan the Emperor came in. Pliny spoke on. Trajan stood and listened for a while. Then he turned and went out.

Not long after Pliny was sitting in his library. His slave brought in a letter, written on a tablet of wax. This letter was from Trajan. It said : " You are commanded to come to the Emperor, at his country house, to give him advice."

When Pliny came to Trajan there were two men standing before the Emperor. One claimed part of the other's goods.

Behind the Emperor stood a number of councillors. He asked sometimes one, sometimes another, for advice. At last he asked Pliny. What Pliny said was wiser than all that the others had said.

Trajan said nothing. But that evening he sent a servant to bid Pliny come and dine at his

table. And so it was each evening, until Pliny went home. And before he went the Emperor sent him a little bronze figure of the Goddess of Wisdom.

Then Trajan travelled away from Rome, and fought in Dacia and conquered Decebalus. At last he came back to Rome.

Soon afterward Pliny was called before Trajan in the palace at Rome. A slave lifted up the curtain of the door. Trajan was sitting in an arm-chair of cedar wood. A slave was waiting at his side. Trajan said : "Enter." Pliny said : "Hail, O Emperor!" Then Trajan said : "Come closer, Pliny, for I have something to say to you." So Pliny approached. Then Trajan said : "I hold you to be a wise man and one well skilled in public business. Are you now willing to leave Rome?" "Sir," said Pliny, "I am a lawyer, and my business is in Rome. Nevertheless, if you wish to send me away, and if I can serve Rome so, there is no man who would be happier than I."

Then Trajan said : "Go now to my province of Bithynia, not as a private person, but in my place. Rule there as Governor, and men shall show you the same honour that they would show to me."

Then Pliny was afraid. He said : "O Trajan, never have I ruled in a province. Much will happen about which I shall be in doubt. What shall I do to act rightly and escape your blame?"

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And Trajan said : " When you are doubtful, send me a letter. Give it into the hands of a swift horseman, and he shall ride as fast as the wind, and then he shall give it to another, and so on, until the messenger comes to the sea. Then he shall give it to the captain of a swift ship which will be waiting there, and he shall bring it to this coast. Then the captain shall give it to a swift horseman who will be waiting. He shall ride as fast as the wind. And so the letter will be brought to me. And in the same way my answer shall come back to you."

Then Pliny said : " So let it be, O Trajan ; and I ask this of the gods, that I may be able to act well in this government."

It was a long journey to Bithynia. Pliny sailed in his ship for many days. At last they passed the headland of Malea. So far was this from Rome that Pliny remembered the Roman saying : " The man who passes Malea must think no more of his family." At last they put into the harbour of a great town. This town was Ephesus. Then the wind turned against them, and the sun grew hotter and hotter. So Pliny and his friends drove in light chariots along the long, straight roads which the Romans had made. On they drove, past little white villages with their palm-trees, up hill and down dale. One evening they drove through the gates into a great town.

The next morning they went on board a swift ship. The sea was very blue, and the sun very hot, and ever a light breeze behind them carried them bounding on. One evening they sailed into the harbour of another great town. And the captain said to Pliny: "My lord, this town that you see before you, and those mountains in the distance, are in the land of Bithynia." Next day Pliny travelled from the town toward the mountains. He came to a fair city, on a rushing river. This was the chief city of Bithynia. Brusa was its name. In the middle of the city rose a rocky hill. Upon this hill was the palace of the Governor. The people welcomed Pliny with great joy. Pliny went to see all things throughout the province. Then he wrote to Trajan:

"I have seen the public baths; they are strong and well built, and well supplied with water.

"I have seen your soldiers; all their swords are bright and keen, and the bowmen have arrows for their bows.

"I have been in the great hall where quarrels of the citizens are decided by the judges. The men are acting justly.

"May the gods prosper us. Farewell."

He sent this letter by a swift messenger to Trajan.



One day there came to Pliny some men looking very sad and very sorrowful. They said: "O Pliny, our town is in sad straits. We have no water. Our gardens are burnt brown by the sun. We cannot swim or bathe ourselves in the baths to refresh ourselves in the heat. Our wives and our slaves have not water enough to wash our long white robes. O Pliny, come and help us, or we must leave our town."

Then Pliny said: "How does this come about?" And the men said: "In this wise. We had no water. But one of our young men wandered in the hills and he found a bubbling spring of clear water, which poured out of the earth and flowed away down the hill-side.

"Then we thought that we could put a pipe to this spring, and bring the water to our town. And we built a square trough, but the men did not join each stone closely, end to end, to its neighbour. So all the clear water trickled through and was wasted. And we beat those men and chased them away.

"Then there came certain other builders, and they said: 'Give us money to hire men, and as much white stone as will be needed, and we will build you a square trough so long that it will reach to the town, and so strong that no drop of water shall be spilt.'

"Then we did all they asked, and the trough

was built. And it ran down the hill-side, across the valley, raised upon arches in the Roman fashion, and all the way into the town. And they came and said : ‘It is ready. Shall we take away the stone at the end and let the water flow in ?’

“And we rejoiced, and crowned them with laurel, and prepared many presents for them. Then we all went up the hill. And I, being the chief man, put forth all my strength and took away the stone. Then with a splash the water leapt into the trough and flowed down to the town. And we all shouted for joy. That evening all the fountains in the town spouted water, clear and sparkling. And we gave the builders presents, and made much of them.

“And on that night we were all awakened by a mighty crash. And in that moment all the fountains in the town ceased to spout. And we all lay and trembled in our beds, for we thought perhaps the gods of the fountains were angry with us.

“And in the morning we looked out from the walls of the town, and lo ! the arches had fallen down with the weight of the water, and the trough was all broken. Then we ran quickly to the houses of the builders, but they had run away in fear in the night.

“And now we have spent all those presents

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in vain. We have only the stones of the arches and of the trough, which lie on the hill-side to this day. And we have no water."

Then Pliny said : "I will come and see if this is so."

When he came there he was met by the citizens. And they showed him sadly how their fig-trees and grape-vines were withered, and how their cows and horses had nothing to drink, and how their robes were yellow and soiled because the women had not water enough to wash the clothes ; for they had to save all they had to boil their onions and peas in, and to cook their meat and bread.

Then Pliny said : "If the Emperor Trajan wills it, we will cause a good trough and good arches to be built. We will use the stones which lie upon the hill-side. But we must ask a skilful architect how to build, so that our arches and our trough shall bear the weight of the water."

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One day a messenger rode up and said : "Hail, O Pliny ! This letter comes from the Emperor." Pliny read the letter. Then he said to his friends : "Wonderfully brave are the Barbarians, and wonderfully faithless. Decebalus, the King of the Dacians, has begun to fight again against the Roman people." Then his friends said :

"Who will lead the army against them?" Pliny said: "Trajan himself."

That day Pliny walked across the market-place on his way to the baths. In the market-place stood a marble statue of Trajan. There, around it, was a crowd of people. By the statue some men seemed to be fighting.

The men outside the crowd called out: "Peace! Peace! Here is the Governor!"

Then there rushed out from the crowd two men, a big one and a little one. Both were dusty-white with flour, and both had bare arms. They cast themselves on their knees and cried: "Do justice, O Pliny!" Pliny said: "Who are ye?" The big one held his peace. The little one said: "We are two citizens of this town. I am Maximus and this is Dionysius. We are both bakers, and we work together. Our wicked slave yonder has done us a wrong." He pointed to the statue. Clinging to the bottom was a tall man with a long beard, in very ragged and wretched garments. He cried out: "Do justice, O Pliny!" Pliny said: "Let the masters speak first, for they are the accusers." Maximus said: "Lately we bought this slave to help us in kneading the bread and stoking the oven. And this morning he fled away." Pliny said: "Now let the slave speak, for he is the accused." The slave said: "O Pliny, these masters of mine have worked me by night and by day. And,

moreover, they have robbed me of my gold ring, with the figure of a king upon it." Pliny was astonished, and said : "How comes the slave with a gold ring?" Then he ordered his soldiers to bring the slave and the two bakers to the palace.

Then he said to the slave : "Tell me all your tale."

The slave said : "Know, O Pliny, that I am by birth a free man. But, falling into debt, I became the slave of a Roman gentleman. I went with him to fight in Dacia. As we attacked a fort, I was captured by a Dacian, and he brought me to their chief, Decebalus. Then I feared greatly that I should be killed with tortures. But because I could speak both the tongue of the Dacians and the tongue of the Romans King Decebalus spared my life.

"Then he sent me many days' journey over the mountains to the King of the Parthians. Decebalus gave me to this King as a present.

"So I lived some time in the land of Parthia."

"What sort of men and what sort of land is that?" said Pliny.

"A strange land and strange men. They have much gold in their mountains, which are bleak and bare. But they care little for that. All they care for is to ride and to tame swift horses. They are more like animals than men. But the King was very kind, and gave me a gold ring,

with his figure engraved upon it. This ring it is which these rogues have secretly taken from me."

Then Pliny said : "A strange tale truly ! If thou canst speak the Dacian tongue, and hast been in the Dacian land, thou shalt do some service to the Roman people. But how camest thou hither ?"

The slave said : "I wanted to come back and be among Roman men. So one day, when the King was on a journey, I took gold and hid it in my garment, and I took a swift horse, and I rode as swiftly as the wind. And when I met Parthian men I showed them the King's ring of gold, and so they let me pass. And at the last I reached a Roman city. And after many days I came here. And then I was bought by those rogues."

"Softly, softly !" said Pliny. "What sign canst give that all this is true ?"

The slave said nothing. The bakers said : "See, he has no sign."

Then the slave put his hands into his ragged garment ; then he drew forth his right hand and held it out to Pliny.

In it lay a brown stone with many little rough points. And each little point sparkled in the sun, as bright as gold.

Pliny said : "That is gold. I have seen it when rough gold was sent to Trajan by out-

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landish kings." And the slave said: "That is all I have left of the gold which I took from my kind master Pacorus." And then he wept.

Then Pliny said to the bakers: "Did you take his ring?" And they said: "My lord, by the very gods and the obedience which we owe you, we know nothing of it."

Pliny sent soldiers to the bakehouse. And in the ashes of the fire they found the ring, where it had fallen.

Then Pliny gave the bakers their money. And he sent the slave to Trajan. And by another messenger he sent the ring and the stone.

So Trajan wore on his finger the ring of Pacorus, King of Parthia.

V

CORNELIUS

THE family of Tiberius and Caius Gracchus lived in Rome after Tiberius and Caius were dead. Sons followed their fathers. They lived in the same great house and they were buried in the same great tomb. But each one made the house more fine and beautiful, because they liked more and more to be comfortable.

Long after the days of Trajan, Cornelius Gracchus was master of the house. Now he was very fond of a certain fish for dinner. But these fish could only be caught in the mountains.

One day he said to his steward, the chief of the slaves: "Dig a great pond in the garden and cover the bottom with the finest gravel and fill it with fresh water." This was done. Then the steward sent slaves to a lake in the mountains, far away. They took casks, on carts, all the way with them. They caught the mountain fish in nets, so as not to hurt them. They poured them into the casks, full of fresh water. Splash! splash! the fish went in. Then very slowly the slaves led the carts back to Rome. They fed the fish with crumbs of bread and crumbs of meat.

At last they emptied the casks into the new pond. Then Cornelius Gracchus came out and looked at the pond. He said to the steward : "These fish must be carefully tended. Set a slave here to watch by them night and day."

This Cornelius had a son, little Cornelius. He was brought up like Pliny. And, like Tiberius and Caius Gracchus, he helped his father to make the daily sacrifice.

One day there was a great stir in the house. Once a year Cornelius and his wife went out to the tomb of the family, beyond the walls of Rome, and made a solemn sacrifice in memory of their ancestors. All the Romans used to do this.

So the whole house was in a bustle. One slave ran this way and one slave ran that way. One ran to the steward and said : "Steward, steward, see, I have the silver box for my master's sacrifice ; please give me the small cakes and the incense quickly, lest he should ask for them." The steward said : "Run fast to the storekeeper, he will give you it all."

"Steward, steward," cried another slave, "are fifty of us to walk in front of my master's litter and fifty in front of my mistress's, or are we to walk in twenties ?" "Go !" answered the steward angrily. "Haven't I told you fifty times, first come fifteen musicians, then forty slaves, then my master, and so again for my mistress, and haven't I told you a hundred and

fifty times that the cooks with the dinner in baskets are to come last of all?"

"Steward," cried out a woman slave, "steward, here is my mistress's litter standing outside in the sun, and nobody has seen to perfuming the cushions inside!"

Then the steward scratched his head, for he had forgotten all about this, and he was ashamed, and sent a slave to do it that moment. But another slave flew up to him, very angry, and said: "O most miserable of men, come here and see a wretched sight!" So they went to the door of the house. All the sun-blinds were very carefully drawn, so that the master could step into his litter without feeling the hot sun at all. But one blind hung awry, so that a little thin streak of sun fell on the pavement.

"Alas! Alas!" cried the steward, and wrung his hands, for he knew that his master would be angry if he had to pass through this sunshine.

However, at last, before Cornelius and his wife came out, all was ready.

Then they went out, along the streets, and through the gate in the walls of Rome. The road went straight on far away. They went on and over a stream and on. At last there were rocks on either side of the road. If you looked closely you would see a curious thing. Here and there there were doors in these rocks. They stopped before one door. A slave opened the

door with a key. Cornelius got out of his litter. He and his wife and little Cornelius went through the door. The slaves held burning torches. Little Cornelius had never been there before. It was a little dark room in the rock. He could see dimly tombs cut in the rock. He knew that Scipio, his great ancestor, lay there. In the middle of the room stood a short column, for an altar. The slave laid down leaves and sticks upon it. The father Cornelius struck a spark out of a stone and kindled fire. Little Cornelius took the silver box from a slave. He held it open and gave his father all that he needed—first the little cakes, then a spoonful of incense, and then grains of salt. His father laid these by the fire, saying prayers in an old language which little Cornelius did not understand. The fire on the altar burnt badly and the smoke always puffed toward him. When they saw this, they all looked sorrowfully at little Cornelius, and one said to his father : “Alas ! Your great ancestors do not accept your son. It is a bad sign for him.”

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When Cornelius was a grown-up man first his father died and was buried in the tomb, and then his mother.

Then a strange thing happened. Cornelius heard a poor man telling a story in a corner

of the market-place. This story was about a certain Jesus, who, they said, had lived in Bethlehem a long time before. Then Cornelius became a Christian. I cannot tell you how it was, because it happened so very long ago. But when it happened, Cornelius caused the altar on which he had offered sacrifices to be taken up and cast into the garden and broken into a thousand pieces. And he never went to offer any sacrifices at the tombs of his forefathers any more. Then he set free his slaves, and went to live in a little house, and wore only a tunic of linen and a white woollen cloak. And he tried to help other men to become Christians.

One day the chief priest of the Christians sent for Cornelius. The chief priest had said to him : "Welcome, son !" Cornelius said : "What do you wish me to do, O my father ?" The Christians sometimes called him their bishop, but usually they called him their father. He said to Cornelius : "Go to the road that leads to the Cyriac Hill ; there, among the houses, you will see a great hall that was once part of a house. Now it is given to us. Open the door with this key. With this other key unlock a box which you will find inside. That is the box belonging to our poor. Henceforward you shall be the priest of that church."

Then Cornelius bowed and took the keys. He ran to the church. He unlocked the door and

went in. The church was lofty. It had pillars along both sides. At the end was a round place. It had a flat wooden roof.

Then Cornelius unlocked the box belonging to the poor. There were only two old coats in it and some old loaves and onions. So he took off his cloak and put it inside. Then he thought : "Where the cloak is, there the shoes ought to be." So he took off his shoes and put them in the cupboard, and went away barefoot. Early in the morning he set off to visit the Christians. Most of them were poor. Then he taught men and women the story of Jesus Christ in his church. Once he worked the whole night through. When he came out of the door the sun was rising. Then he sang :

"Maker of the earth and sky,
Ruler of the day and night,
At thy word the shadows fly,
Morn returns and all is bright.

"Through the midnight hours forlorn,
Thou, O Lord of Light, art near ;
Taught by Thee, the bird of morn
Tells that day will soon appear.

"Let us then our hearts arouse :
Morning calls us to awake,
Bids us haste to pay our vows
And our little prayer to make."¹

¹ Translation of *Æterne Rerum Conditor*, Breviary hymn for Sunday Lauds, by Robert Campbell of Skerrington.

There came to him a Christian lady, Lucina. She said : "What can I do for the people?" He said : "Give food and kindness to the poor people." She came again and said : "I have done as you told me, and now I would gladly do more." Then he said : "The Christian people lack one thing. They have no place where they can bring their dead."

Lucina said : "Come with me." They walked along the very same road that led to the tomb of Cornelius's forefathers. There were rocks on each side. If you looked closely you saw doors in the rocks. They passed the tomb of Cornelius and went down the hill, across the stream, and up the opposite hill.

Cornelius saw a gate on the left-hand side. Lucina unlocked the door. Inside there was a rocky hill. On the hill grew vines in rows, bearing bunches of purple grapes.

Lucina said : "This vineyard is mine. In the hill we will dig rooms ; they will last as long as the hill stands. There the Christian people can bury their dead."

Next day, at Lucina's order, twenty men with picks and spades entered the vineyard. The leader marked a space on the rock with red chalk.

"First," he said, "cut out the door." Merrily the pickaxes clinked on the rock. Quickly flew the chips. "Now," he said, "cut steps into the

rock." This was done. Next he said : "We will make a great passage, wide and airy."

Thus they worked together briskly until the passage and rooms were made.

Then they shouldered their tools and marched away. The Christians rejoiced greatly over their new place. Cornelius and Lucina were the first to go in and see it.

* * * * *

At last Cornelius grew an old man. So wise was he that the Christians chose him to be their chief priest. They called him Father Cornelius.

In those days it happened that the Emperor Decius ruled over Rome. One day a messenger came swiftly to the palace. He said : "Hail, O Emperor! In the land of the Dacians a great war has arisen. Every day barbarians come into the Roman lands and burn and kill."

Then Decius was greatly troubled. He ordered his army to march toward the land of the Dacians. He called his councillors together and said : "Surely the gods are angry with us that such a misfortune has happened. Let all men make sacrifice to Mars, the God of War. Then perhaps he will help us against the Barbarians."

But one said : "O Emperor, many men and women, calling themselves Christians, say that they may not sacrifice to the gods."

Then Decius said : "Let all that will not sacrifice die."

Soon all the people of Rome went to the temple to sacrifice. Some Christians went away from Rome. Others hid. Others sacrificed. Soon Decius was told : "Cornelius does not sacrifice." Decius said : "Send for him."

Cornelius was brought before Decius. He said : "Hail, O Emperor!" Decius said : "Art thou Cornelius?" He said : "Yes." Decius said : "Cornelius, how comes it that you will not sacrifice, when if you did the gods might have pity on the Roman people?" Cornelius said : "All that I can do for the Roman people I do. But you say 'Sacrifice.' I cannot sacrifice ; there is no choice."

Decius said : "If you do not, the punishment is death." "All this I knew before," said Cornelius.

The Emperor said : "Take Cornelius to the Temple of Mars, outside the walls. Perchance some kindly god will soften his heart as he goes to the temple."

So the soldiers led him to the Temple of Mars. They went along the very same road which led to the tomb of Cornelius's forefathers. The Temple of Mars stood on the left-hand side of the road.

There stood a pillar of stone, and on it a little fire was burning. Beside it stood a little boy

holding a silver box. In it was sweet-smelling powder for burning. He had also a silver spoon.

Then the priest said to Cornelius : "Sprinkle this incense on the altar, so that Mars may help the Emperor in the war." Cornelius said : "No, I cannot." Then the priest said again : "Sprinkle but a few grains and thou shalt go." Cornelius said : "No."

Then the priest covered his head with his garment. So the soldiers led Cornelius away.

In the evening Lucina and the other men and women came to carry away the body of Cornelius. They placed it on a stretcher and carried it along the road past the tomb of his forefathers to the vineyard of Lucina.

And there they laid it. They painted on the rocky wall a picture of Cornelius holding a book containing the story of Jesus. You can see this picture there now, truly.

Only once more after this were the Christians punished. Then all Romans became Christians.

VI

ALARIC

THIS tale tells of the fall of Rome.

Beyond the great river which Trajan crossed, and beyond the forests of the Dacians, there lived a King called Alaric. The hair of this Alaric was golden-red, falling down in great locks ; his beard was thick and short ; so keen were his eyes that few durst gaze under his brows ; his shoulders seemed as broad as the shoulders of two men. Well could he wield his sword, and cast his spear, shoot arrow, or bend bow, hold shield, or ride horse.

The people of Alaric were called the Goths. He had many warriors in his host.

One day Alaric the King was sitting in his hall drinking mead out of the horn. There came in a man. He was dusty-footed and his mantle was torn. Alaric said : " Whose man are you, and what is your name ? " He said : " I have lost my house and my kindred, and my horses and oxen, and my land ; and I will not tell my name to you, O King, or to any man, ever again." Alaric asked : " Who has done you this great harm ? " The man said :

"To the east lies the forest, and beyond the forest lie the great marshes, and beyond the marshes lie the lands of the Hunnish folk. These folk are the children of witches and giants. They have burnt down our villages, and slain our men and our women and our children."

Then said Alaric : "Wilt thou take arms and come with us and fight against these Hun folk and do brave deeds like our fathers ?"

The man said : "O King, hast thou ever slain a giant or a witch ? When a man meets a witch, let him turn and flee away."

"Well," said Alaric, "lie thou there on the bench to-night. To-morrow thy courage may have come back again."

But next morning the man was nowhere to be found.

That night all the King's warriors sat round drinking mead out of the horns. Alaric said to them : "Our crops are growing smaller, our cows and sheep have little to eat. What shall we do ?"

His oldest councillor said : "Many years ago, O King, our fathers came here from the North, bringing their wives and children in the wagons. They came from the North, because there was little corn and little grass left there."

Then said Alaric : "Shall we go to the South or to the North ?"

His oldest councillor seized his harp and sang :

“ In the middle lies Gothland,
Round about lies the earth ;
Far to the Northward
Lie lands of strange monsters,
Lie lands of strange people,
Giants, witches, and worse ;
Far to the Southward
Lie lands of the Roman folk,
Lie lands of good fighting,
Lie lands full of gold.

Go we to the South, or go we to the Northward ? ”

All the warriors shouted : “ Southward ! Southward ! ”

Then the Goths went to their homes—the wooden halls with pointed roofs.

Alaric told his wife all that had happened, and said : “ What do you think of it ? ” She said : “ Last night I dreamed that there fell in on us, on the eastern side, a mighty, great river, and broke up all the hall. And then I looked to the South, and there I saw an apple hang, so bright that it was like gold ; and a hawk rose out of the wood and devoured it.” Alaric said : “ Tell me what this dream means, for women are right wise counsellors.” And she said : “ I think it means that southward lies our good fortune.”

Then with good hope Alaric commanded his men to bring out the great ox-carts. His wife

commanded the women to bring all the treasures from the house.

Then began the wandering of the people. For ten years they wandered South. They came to the border of the Roman provinces. Here they fought and there they fought. Sometimes they conquered the Romans. Sometimes the Romans conquered them. Never had there been such fighting. Always Alaric said to his warriors : "We must go on till we reach Rome."

* * * * *

Meantime in Rome there was a young Emperor called Honorius. Honorius lived in a cool marble room with all the curtains drawn. He lay there half asleep and half awake. When he got up he went into the garden to see the gold-fish swimming in the pond.

One day a messenger came spurring across the bridge and up the hill. He bore the news that Alaric had conquered the Romans in the mountains, and was fighting his way to Rome.

Outside the door of the Emperor's room the slave at the door held up his hand and said softly : "Stop!" The messenger said : "I come from the battle with bad news. For the safety of the Roman people, I must see the Emperor." But the slave said : "You cannot. The Emperor is sleeping."

So it happened the next day. On the third day the slave lifted the curtain and said to the messenger : " You may enter."

Then those outside heard voices in the room, and the sound of weeping.

Meantime the Roman people murmured. Every one asked his neighbours : " Why do all these messengers come riding so fast ? "

At last they were told : " Far away to the North Alaric is coming to attack you." Then they were full of terror and clamoured in the streets. But some said : " Be quiet, you men. Wait ; our Emperor will save us."

So they waited, and waited, and waited. And Alaric and his men were coming nearer. At last Honorius showed what he could do. They saw his litter at the palace gate. His soldiers and servants and friends stood in front of it and behind it. He lay down in the litter and the slaves lifted it up. Then off they all went, and left Rome and the Romans all alone.

Alaric led his men always southward. They marched along the Roman road, which ran straight to Rome. They marched comfortably, for the road was paved with stones and beaten flat.

Alaric rode along in front. He had a coat made of little rings of steel. It was made for him by a friend of his, a cunning smith. So hard was it that no sword had ever pierced it. The Goths said it was a magic coat.

As Alaric rode along he saw little towns and farms on every side. He said to his men : “Go out and bring back food enough for us all.”

Then some leapt on to their horses. These were strange, wild folk. Their coats had broad belts, where hung an axe and a knife. Their long trousers were tucked into soft boots. They leapt on to their shaggy horses, seized the reins, and galloped off with wild cries. Soon smoke rose from the villages which they were burning.

Then some of the Goths marched past Alaric, going out to take food. As they passed, they beat their sword-hilts upon their shields, rimmed with steel, and shouted : “Hail, lord and leader!” Soon smoke rose from the villages which they were burning. Alaric smiled and said : “Here are plenty of hawks, but where is the golden apple ?”

Every night the men asked Alaric how far it was to Rome, and every morning they strained their eyes to see it.

Now at last Alaric, first of all the host, came to the top of a hill. Below he saw a fair city of marble houses and gilded roofs. It had white walls round it. Through the midst ran a yellow river.

Then he called to his men and said : “Yonder is Rome.” Then they all shouted mightily :

“Rome! Rome!” Then a bard sprang forward and sang:

“Hawks from the wild wood,
Hawks that are hungry,
Sharpen your talons,
Shake out your wings!
Bright is the apple,
Sweet is the juice of it,
Golden the flesh.
Now we have found it,
The land of good fighting,
The land of great treasure,
Of gold and of pearls.”

Meanwhile in Rome the men climbed up daily on to the walls, and looked out to see if the Goths were coming. And at last when they saw the Goths a sound of weeping and sorrow went up.

Then the chief Romans said: “Let men run quickly to the gates, let them lock the great locks, and bar the great bolts, and chain the great chains across the door.” And swiftly they did it, and all the sixteen gates were shut. And they waited on the walls, thinking every moment that Alaric would lead his men down the hill.

They saw the Goths come part way down the hill. Then a great company of them, horse and foot and wagons, went to the left, and a great company to the right, and marched away. A great company halted where they were. They

pulled the wagons round, so that they made a square. So night fell. Then all around Rome the Romans saw the camp-fires of the Goths burning.

* * * *

At first some among the Romans were pleased. But soon they had eaten up every grain of corn in the bin, and every cabbage and pea in the garden. Then they grew very hungry, and grew hungrier and hungrier every day. One day the chief Romans met in the Senate House. But a crowd gathered outside and shouted : "Give us food !" Some shouted : "Bread !" and others : "Let us rather die by the Goth than by hunger !"

Then a Roman stood up in the Senate House. He was pale, and his arms were very thin. He spoke boldly : "I will go to Alaric, and try to make peace, so that our people may have food again." All the chief Romans agreed that this John, with another, called Basil, should be sent to Alaric.

They went forth in rich robes and with servants following them, but all as thin and pale as could be. The Goths led them to Alaric. They wondered at his tallness, and his fair hair, and dared hardly look at his eyes under his brows.

Then said Alaric : "What men be ye ?" John said : "We are noble Romans. We come as

ambassadors to you, O King of the Barbarians, from the Roman people." "So," said Alaric, "what do you say?" Then John said proudly: "If you will make peace on reasonable terms, we are willing to agree." Alaric said nothing. He played with his buckle. Then John grew angry: "But if you will not," he said, "then will the mighty Roman people come forth against you; not a man in Rome but will come forth." Alaric said: "The thicker the grass the easier mown." John was afraid. "Listen," said Alaric, "I will have peace with Rome, on these terms, and on these terms only. You shall give up all your treasures of gold and of silver and of jewels, and you shall give up every Goth who is now a slave in Rome." Then John covered up his face with his mantle, for he knew that these were hard terms. But Basil said fiercely: "What do you mean to leave to the Romans?" And Alaric answered: "Their lives."

Then John and Basil turned away, hanging their heads, and went out.

When John and Basil went back, they persuaded the Romans to give Alaric a mighty ransom—four thousand pounds of gold and five thousand pounds of silver and five thousand garments of silk and three thousand pounds of pepper.

The Romans, pale and weak, carried the gold

and the silver and the silk and the pepper outside the walls. The strong Goths piled them on their wagons. Crack went the whips and round went the wheels, the oxen tugged, and so they disappeared, men and wagons, over the hills.

Then all the Romans rejoiced. But some shook their heads and said: "Truly, the Goths will come back again."

* * * * *

At this time there lived in Rome a widow lady, Marcella. She was old. Her hair was grey, and her face had many wrinkles.

Marcella was very rich. But in her house she had no gold or silver dishes, not so much as a silver spoon. All was of wood. She had sold her silver dishes. She did this because she would not eat from silver dishes while poor people ate off wood. She was a Christian.

A little girl lived with her. This girl was called Principia. In the morning Principia washed the floor, and swept, while Marcella mixed flour and water and baked rolls. Then Marcella called in some poor friends, and they all had breakfast together.

While Alaric was outside the walls Marcella found it very difficult to buy flour. There was none in the market, although she was rich enough to pay its weight in gold.

When Alaric and his men marched away, Principia danced about the house and said to Marcella : "Now, mother, let us have a great baking, and give a real good dinner to every single hungry person."

But Marcella said : "My daughter, we will do what we can, but I tell you that there is greater need coming, for all men say the Goths are gone but for a little while." Then she said seriously : "Listen, Principia : I do not wish that you or I should ever leave this poor people in Rome."

As they were talking there came in a great number of noble Romans, men and women, all friends and cousins of Marcella. At the front came an old lady, grey-haired like Marcella, dressed like her in a plain gown of black serge, with a black cloth like a veil upon her head. She too was a Christian, and had been a friend of Marcella all her life.

"Marcella," she said, "will you leave everything here and come with us ?" "Where are you going, and why ?" "All men say the Goths are gone for a little time only. We are weary of such fighting and trouble and sadness. We are going to find a peaceful place. We are going to Bethlehem. We are going to live there, and to do all the good that we can, in the place where Jesus lived." Marcella said : "I thank you, and I wish you peace and

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happiness. But I will not come with you, though I thank you."

And she would not join them, for all that they said. So next day they all went out at the gates of Rome, and soon they were out of sight.

Then Principia and Marcella had only their poor friends and their priest left. And there they worked all through the summer. And one day a cloud of dust was seen beyond the hills. And out of the dust came men and wagons. One body went to the left and one body to the right and one stopped there. Their fires at night made a ring quite round the city. Alaric and the Goths had come back.

Then, soon, Marcella could buy no flour again, even for its weight in gold. Thin little children sat and cried on her doorstep. Then she and Principia dragged out a great sack of flour, which she had bought before, and made rolls, and fed the children and their hungry mothers and fathers, who climbed up the hill to Marcella's house.

Outside the city Alaric had a great tent built to dwell in. All through the winter he dwelt there. Then came Christmas, and still he dwelt there. January and February and March passed, and the summer came. Every day the sun grew hotter and hotter.

One night in August, after sunset, when the

men were beginning to move after the heat, Alaric sent for all the leaders to come to his great tent. There he stood with his great sword in his hand, and said : "This is my first command : Gather the men together to-night, and at moonrise march down to the gates. To-night we shall take Rome." Then all the chiefs exulted. Alaric said : "Now shall this deed be famous while the world stands fast."

Alaric said : "This is my second command : Whatever treasure you see, take it as you like. You shall have the treasures of silver and of gold. But this I say : Let no man throughout the host take as much as one pennyworth from the church of Saint Peter or from the church of Saint Paul. See ye to it.

"My third command is this : On the third day at sunset every Goth shall leave Rome."

In Rome Principia was at her window, and she saw the moon rising. Then she heard a shout at the city gate, and loud crashing, and a great flame of fire shot into the sky.

Marcella said : "O my daughter, now certainly it is the Goths. We must wait downstairs." So she and Principia waited in the great hall. Principia grew more and more frightened. They could hear loud shouts and cries coming nearer and nearer. Then Marcella said : "I shall open the great door. We are not the enemies of any

man." Principia wanted to cry, she was so much afraid.

Then a band of great tall men rushed in through the open door. Some had great heavy sacks over their shoulders. They had ladies' necklaces of jewels tied round their necks, and sticks and axes and swords in their hands. The first shouted out to Marcella : "Now, old witch, bring out your gold." Marcella said : "I have no gold or silver; look, all is of wood." Then all the Goths said : "She is a witch; by her magic she has turned all her gold to wood." Then first one and then the other struck Marcella a heavy blow. She was knocked down on to her knees. And she cried out to them : "Oh, do not beat my little Principia! Oh, do not hurt my poor little Principia!" Then one of the Goths shouted out : "Stop!" And they stopped. He said : "It seems to me that this woman is not a witch. Certainly she is very brave. I think she must be an alruna-wife, wise in council."

Then the Goths began to think where they could take Marcella and Principia; for if they left them in the house other Goths might come and do them both harm.

One said : "Take them to the churches; our Lord Alaric has said that the church of Saint Peter and the church of Saint Paul are to be safe, and all that is in them.

Then Principia said : "The church of Saint Paul is near. I will show you the way." The Goth said : "Well said, little maiden."

Marcella was hurt, so that she could not walk. But the Goths made her sit in a chair, and they tied two spear-shafts under it, and so carried her out. They went through the streets. Goths were going in and out of every house. Each had a gold vase, or a silver dish, or a bracelet of jewels. They shouted and sang.

Then the Goths brought Marcella and Principia in safety to the church of Saint Paul. There they stayed that night and the next day, and the next night and the next day. And near sunset on the third day they heard the rumbling noise of great wagons, and the Goths singing, and the noise grew fainter and fainter.

By sunset there was not one Goth in Rome.

Among all the gold and silver treasure taken in Rome one thing pleased Alaric best. It was a battle-coat made of little gold rings. Alaric said : "I will wear this coat when next I go to battle, and no man shall take it from me." Even the poorest Goth had at least a rich bracelet, won at Rome.

Then Alaric led his men southward. No one fought against them. But it was no good fortune that they met with. For one day a fever seized Alaric, and there, in his tent, on

the bank of a river, he died. Then all the Goths mourned for him.

The bard sang his lamentation :

“Never again
Shall you see the King, Alaric.
Never again
Shall you see him in hall,
Nor at the chess-play,
Nor at the sword-play.

“When you come to the battle,
Look to the right hand,
Look to the left hand,
Nowhere is Alaric !
He was your strength,
He was your victory,
He led you on.

“Great was the fame of him :
Never was any man
Greater than he !
Long as the world shall stand,
Thus shall men call him :
‘Alaric the Mighty,
The Taker of Rome !’”

* * * * *

No one knows where Alaric lies in his grave. This is how it came about.

The bard sang the lament. The chief of the Goths rose up. He said : “Hear, ye men of the Goths. Never have we had such a king as Alaric. Truly, he was the greatest of the sons of Odin. Now he ought to lie in such a grave as never man had.”

Then all the chiefs spoke of ways in which they could do him honour. "We will put on him his coat of gold," they said. "He shall have by him his favourite horse, with trappings of gold. He shall have his golden cup, and a great dish of gold, set with pearls, which he won at the taking of Rome. So he will have all that a king should have when he comes to Valhalla."

For in those days the Goths believed that Father Odin received heroes into his golden hall of Valhalla when they died.

One chief arose. "Ah," he said, "if you leave our Lord Alaric so, some Roman will break open his tomb, and rob him, and scatter his bones on the earth. This will be great shame to you and to us all."

Certain chiefs said: "Goths, we know what to do to avoid this. Alaric shall have such a tomb as never man had. Only give us fifty slaves, strong and skilful, and in three days we will tell you what to do."

All the Goths agreed, clashing their swords on their shields.

The chiefs took the slaves, and they went away with them, up the bank of the river, upstream.

All the next day, and all the next day, the Goths waited. But the chiefs said nothing.

On the third day, at midday, the Goths were lying, for coolness, on the bank of the stream.

Lo and behold ! the reeds and rushes that were in the stream began to appear above the water. Lo and behold ! the water was ceasing to come from above ! Soon the ooze and slime appeared at the very bottom of the river-bed. No man had ever set eyes on it before.

All the Goths began to say : " What does this marvel mean ? Then those chiefs who had taken the fifty slaves said : " Come." They all marched up the river and looked at its shiny bottom. Presently they came to a place where the river widened and its bottom was clean and pebbly. There in the middle was a burial place built like a room, of strong earth and stone. It was a burial chamber fit for a king.

The chief said : " This chamber have the slaves built for Alaric. Here will we lay him, in his golden coat, with all his golden treasure." The Goths said : " By what magic have you turned aside the river ? " " Our slaves have dug a canal, leading to a lake. They have made a dam across the river, and have turned the water through the canal into the lake. When we have laid Alaric in his tomb, they shall bring the water back again, and it shall flow over Alaric's chamber and keep it safe from all men."

Then all the Goths shouted for joy, and said : " Well and wisely have you wrought. Odin All-father will laugh when he looks down from Valhalla and sees this deed."

And so they did it. They placed a great stone before the door. The slaves sealed it all round with clay. Then they broke down the dam, and the water rushed into the bed of the river. It lapped round the tomb, and it rose, and it rose, till it covered the top. At last there was nothing to be seen but the clear water of the river flowing down.

No one knows to this day where the tomb of Alaric is. But for many years the Goths sang the song of Alaric: how he took Rome, and how he sits in his chamber, under the cool water, and waits until his Goths need him again.

VII

GENEVIEÈVE

A LONG way from Rome was another country, called Gaul. This was the country to which Julius Cæsar and his army had marched. It was from Gaul that Cæsar had seen the cliffs of England. It was from Gaulish merchants that he had heard about the Britons. The Romans ruled Gaul for many years after Cæsar died.

Ten years after the death of Alaric a little girl, called Geneviève, was born in Gaul. Her father and mother were rich people. Geneviève lived in a large, beautiful white villa in the country. But as she grew up she sometimes saw that her father and her mother looked very gloomy and worried. One day her mother said : "These horrid Barbarians ! I won't go anywhere where they are to be met !" But her father said : "Though we make fun of them, and despise them, yet, really, Romans as we are, we are afraid of them !"

Geneviève was full of curiosity ; she wanted to see a Barbarian. She said to her slave : "What is a Barbarian ?" The slave said : "Oh, they

are terrible folk! They have come into all the Roman lands from Frankland and other lands, and they are terrible and dangerous."

At last Geneviève saw a Barbarian. She and her mother were invited to the wedding feast of a friend's daughter. And there Geneviève saw the Barbarians, for her friend, this Roman girl, married a Barbarian chief. All his followers were sitting about in the courtyard, eating meat stew full of onions, and combing their long hair and smearing it with butter and fat, after the manner of their race; and they were singing songs in their own language, and laughing, and very gay.

When one stood up Geneviève saw that he was the tallest man she had ever seen. Her father looked like a boy beside him. The Barbarians waved their hands to pretty little Geneviève and spoke to her in a friendly way in the Latin tongue, but so badly spoken that she almost laughed at it.

When she got home again she danced about and sang: "I won't marry a Barbarian, for I'm a Roman!"

When Geneviève was older she heard the story of Marcella, and other stories like it, and she thought that she too might do as Marcella had done. Many people had been driven out of their homes by the Barbarians. So there were many poor people.

Then her father died, and her mother died.

Geneviève left her big house. She set free all her slaves. She put her bed, and a few clothes, and chairs and a table on a wooden cart; and her old slave yoked the two oxen to the cart. Then they piled the kitchen pots on to the back of the cart. Geneviève walked beside the cart and they set off. She was going to live in a little house in the town which was called Paris.

The roads were very bad, because no one repaired them now as the Romans had done. So Geneviève's cart tipped up first on one side and then on the other. Bump! went one wheel into a rut, and bump! went the other. Bang!—a pot fell off behind. Geneviève tied it on again. Bump!—it fell off again. Then who laughed but Geneviève? She tried to sit upon a chair in the cart, but pitching and tossing it went. So she got out again. And at last they came to the top of a hill.

* * * *

There Geneviève saw in the valley a broad river, and in the river an island, and on the island the town of Paris.

Geneviève led her oxen down the hill. She found the road getting more and more muddy. Then she went on to the bank of the river.

She drove across a wooden bridge. The water

ran down slowly and smoothly. The river was broad and muddy.

The bridge led on to an island. All round the island there were built stone walls. These walls were so broad and thick that they had steps in them, up which you could get to the top. You could go right round the island on the top of the wall. Thirty tall towers stood in the wall, all round the island.

The bridge led to a great gate. The porter nodded to Geneviève as she drove in. Inside, in the town, Geneviève asked her way to her house. The people in the town all spoke good Latin, like Geneviève herself. Her house was in the chief street, which ran straight across the island, from the bridge on one side to the bridge on the other.

In the morning Geneviève washed the wooden floor, and swept. Then she mixed flour and water and made rolls. Then she called in some poor friends, and they all had breakfast together.

More and more people grew to love her. Geneviève lived there many years, until she was quite old.

One evening the porter was shutting the great gate. A poor man came limping over the bridge. He was dusty-footed, and he had no money. He came inside the gate and stood gazing about as though he knew not where to go. The porter said : "Well, friend, what inn

are you going to?" The poor man said: "Let me sleep here in the shelter of the wall, for the sake of pity!" Then the porter bethought himself, and said: "There is a kind lady here called Geneviève, she will surely help you." And he directed him to her house.

First Geneviève gave the man food. She gave him soup full of vegetables, and meat, and bread. Then she said: "Tell me now who you are." The man, approaching the fire, said: "I am no man any more. I have lost my house and kindred, and my horses and oxen, and my land. So I will not tell you my name, nor to any man any more." Geneviève said: "There is no need to tell." He said: "But I will tell you this. I come from the town that was called Tongri. Now the wild beasts have their lairs there. There came one day a man. He said there was a folk called the Hun folk. They were the sons of witches and giants. He said they had four feet, like horses, and hairy skins, and the faces of pigs, and that they were more dreadful than any other living thing. And he said they were coming toward us, out of the forests, to attack us. Then our good bishop led us all to the church, and we wept, and prayed God to turn away the Hun folk. And our Bishop said that he would even go to Rome to ask for help, and that the Hun folk should be turned away. So he went, and we waited. He came back sad and

sick. And he rose up in his litter and said : ‘O my people, there is no help to be got from Rome.’ And no man said a word. Then he said : ‘Farewell, my people, for I must go on a journey.’ Then we all cried out to him : ‘Do not leave us, holy father ! Do not forget us, holy father !’ For we did not know what he meant. But that same night he died, and, truly, I think it was of his great haste and sorrow.”

“This is a strange tale,” said Geneviève. “Then,” said the man, “alas ! alas ! we found that all was true that was said of the Hun folk. They are more cruel and more terrible than anything else on earth. And of Tongri not one stone stands upon another. All is burnt. And who has escaped besides me ?” He burst into tears.

Geneviève said : “Sir, you must tell me if you can where these Hun folk have gone.” He cried out : “I cannot tell ! I cannot tell !”

Next day Geneviève would have asked him more, but he got up at dawn, and was stirring as soon as she was. She gave him food and a warm cloak, and then he would not wait, but was gone before the sun rose.

Geneviève often said to herself: “What a tale ! If it be true, what shall we do if ever the Hun folk come to Paris ?” She said nothing to any one.

One night, just after sunset, Geneviève was

going up to her little room when there was a knocking at the door. Outside stood a big country cart; the oxen were puffing out their breath, and hanging their heads, and their sides were heaving. A country man came forward. He said: "Could you give my wife a shelter? I and the oxen can stay outside." "Take the cart into the yard," said Geneviève, "and put your oxen into the stable, and let your wife come with me."

When everything was done for them, and they had eaten and drunk, and the wife had gone to bed, Geneviève said to the man: "How is it that you come in this plight and so late?" He said: "Madam, we are but the first of many." She said: "How so?" He said: "How dare any man stay in his lonely house and see the villages burning round?" She sighed and said: "What new war is this?" He said: "No war, for nobody dare fight them." "Whom?" said she. "The folk they call the Hunnish folk," said he. Then Geneviève said: "Alas! And how near are they?" "Madam," said he, "my farm was twenty miles from this city of Paris, and last night we saw already fire upon the hills, twenty miles away. So we left all and fled."

Then she said: "Go, and take your rest." And in that night she heard the fugitives knocking loudly at the great gate.

Next day, fully early, all the people of Paris

began to stir about in the streets. At last they all gathered together in the centre of the town, in their market-place. Geneviève was standing among them.

The Governor of the town came out and spoke to the people. He said : “Let any man who knows anything for certain about this folk stand up and tell it.”

Then a man stood up. He said : “Sir, I am from a village two days’ journey away. I was awakened from my bed, and I ran out and hid beside the ditch. And the air was full of the shrieks and yells of the Huns. They shriek like owls, but a thousand times louder. And they set fire to our houses. I saw the men of them. They have four legs, like horses. They are very hairy, like goats. They have the faces of pigs.” “How do they fight?” said the Governor. “I know not,” said the man. “Truly, I hid, and then I fled away.”

Then another man stood up. “I am from a village two days’ journey away. And I can tell you how they fight. I have seen two of them. But I think they have not four legs, but they ride small and shaggy horses, and they ride as though they were one with the horse. I ran and they chased me, and I leapt into the water and dived and swam and so escaped. But they shot arrows after me, and one pierced my cloak, and here it is.”

Then they all craned their necks. The Governor held the arrow in his hand. It was small and light. The top was made of a bone, sharpened, and it was tightly bound into the shaft with sinew.

The man said : "I believe they shoot with such arrows, and run about on their little horses with great swiftness. For they travel with extraordinary quickness, to-day here, to-morrow there. It is as if a man would follow a grasshopper."

Then the Governor said : "Men of Paris, I know your courage. If the Hun folk come to Paris, let each man get his weapons. We will go out and meet them, and with our strong spears and swords and our strong ranks we will resist them in the fields." First one man and then all the people shouted out : "So be it!"

Then Geneviève was filled full of courage. She called out to the Governor : "Sir, give me leave to speak." And when she was called up to the speaking-place she said : "Pardon me for my boldness. But it is important that you should hear this. Whether they be men or animals, I know not. But evidently these Huns fight like animals, charging their enemy. What can they do against the walls of a town? Let us shut our great gates; then the river will guard us. Let us bring in all food from the villages round. The Huns are very many.

What will they eat? We, in the town, will eat the food, and they, outside, will find none. Then, perforce, they will go away." Then at first one man said this, and another man that. The Governor was silent. At last he said: "Geneviève, old woman as you are, you have spoken better than any of us, soldiers though we be." He said: "Men of Paris, those were wise words." Then they all agreed in a moment and shouted out: "So be it! So be it!"

Then the Governor said to Geneviève: "Woman, it may be you have saved us all."

So all that day, and the next, the people of Paris went out to the villages and told the people there what must be done. One man drove in a cart full of sacks of flour. Another drove in a herd of sheep. A little girl drove in a flock of geese, driving them with a bough. A boy and his dog drove in a dozen pigs. So that the city was full of things to eat. Although they were so anxious, the people laughed and sang:

"Our town is like a goodly dish
Of dainty things to eat.
Sit down, ye hungry Huns, sit down,
And thank us for a treat!"

But sometimes, in spite of singing, they shivered for fear, lest the Huns should really sit down in front of the town and devour them as they had devoured the city of Tongri.

But outside in the villages there was not so much as a crumb of bread left.

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At midday on the second day Geneviève went up on to the walls. She looked west and east and north and south. She saw smoke rising up far off.

Then she came down hastily, and went to the Governor, for she had thought of something. She said: "Sir, are all our people and the people of the villages come into Paris?" He said to his servant: "Go and see." The servant came back and said: "Yes." The Governor said: "Shut the great gates, and bar the great bars, and lock the great locks." Geneviève started up and laid her hand on his arm and said: "Oh, sir, ought we not now to knock down the bridges?" Then one of the men of Paris said angrily: "What! Knock down our stone bridges? You must be mad!" The Governor said: "Why should we knock our bridges down to-day? To-morrow will be time enough." Geneviève said: "Come." They all went on to the walls. She stretched out her hand and pointed to the smoke rising in the distance. Then she said: "How near, think you, are the Huns? How long, think you, will it take you to knock down the bridges?" Then they hung their heads, and went down to the

market-place. The Governor said: "Send all carpenters and masons, and men and boys to help them, to the bridges, with all speed." Then the men hurried down to the bridges; they swung their pickaxes and cracked the stones. With a splash a great stone fell into the river. The men were wetted with the splash, and they all shouted out: "Again, brothers, again!" And so stone after stone fell into the river. At last a great piece of the bridge broke away in the middle and the river rushed between. So they did to the other bridge, on the other side. So Paris was really an island now.

That night, when all the people were in bed and hardly a light twinkled in the whole town, Geneviève came downstairs. She put on a cloak with a hood of grey. Very quietly she lifted the latch and crept out. She could see her way by the moonlight. She said to herself: "I must look out and see if there is anything to be seen." She climbed up all the steps on to the top of the wall. All the town was quiet. Then she looked across the wall, and across the river, and across the fields. There, much nearer, was a great blaze of fire going up. Then she knew that the Huns were very near. And she listened, and heard far off strange, wild cries and shrieks.

She said to herself: "Now, truly, the Huns

are nearly here. As soon as it is light I must come here again."

So, as the sun rose, Geneviève climbed up the steps once more. She looked straight out, and this is what she saw.

Great carts were drawn up in the fields. Their covers were made of leather, or linen, or bark of trees. All round by the wagons there were running and walking and sitting crowds of strange creatures, shaggy and short.

Geneviève looked again. Now she saw that they were indeed men and women. But their legs were so short, and their garments so hairy, and their shoes so flat and shapeless, that they could hardly walk. Each man looked like a brown bear waddling on its hind legs. She could not see their faces so far off. This was a good thing, for they had ugly, bad faces, with little starting black eyes. This it was which made men say that they had the faces of pigs.

All round about the wagons strayed countless horses. Among them darted the little men, on their horses, looking as though they themselves had four legs, just as the man had said.

Then Geneviève saw a most curious thing. She saw the women climb into the wagons. These wagons seemed to be to them like houses. They came out with lumps of meat, and gave a lump of meat each to certain men. These men seized the ropes of their horses and jumped

on. Fast they began to ride. Each man had laid the meat under his saddle. As they rode along the edge of the field Geneviève saw them take out the meat and begin to tear it with their teeth as they rode.

But then she stayed no longer. She went straight down to the Governor's house. She came in upon him and said : "They are here ! They are here !"

Now in the days that followed Geneviève was the chief housekeeper for the whole town. She it was who gave out the bread and the meat to each wife for the whole family. For no one knew for how long they might be shut up.

Meantime the Governor and the men stayed on the walls. They were glad that they had broken the bridges down. For on the first day the Hun folk advanced to the bank of the stream. They drew their bows and let fly their arrows tipped with bone. The arrows fell into the river like rain. Then the Huns shouted in their strange manner. They rode to the bridge, even to the very edge.

Then they tried to find boats, and could not. They did not know enough to build them. So they could do no harm to the men of Paris.

Then for many days they remained outside in their wagons. All around smoke went up from villages which they burnt. But every day

they had less food and less food. But those inside had still enough. Then the horses of the Huns had less grass and less grass as they ate it up. But the men of Paris had still enough. Then when they had burnt, and plundered, and killed, and devoured all the food for many miles round, the Huns had no longer anything to eat at all. But the men of Paris still had enough to eat, though they ate sparingly. For neither man, woman, nor child had wasted anything, knowing not how long they might be shut up.

One morning the Huns put their horses to the wagons. The women and the children climbed up inside, and the men scampered along on their horses. With strange, loud cries they went. Presently there was nothing to be seen but a cloud of dust far off, and the great deep ruts in the field where the wagons had stood.

VIII

CLOVIS

ONE day messengers came to the Governor of Paris. They said : "We come from Clovis, the King of the Franks. He wishes to make a pact of friendship with you."

Now Clovis was lord of all the country higher up the river. The Governor was afraid that Clovis might want to come to Paris and rule there. "We wish him well," said he. "Why should we do more ?"

The Frankish messengers said : "If two men ride on a horse, one must ride in front. You sit upon the river as if it were a horse, and your island is the saddle you sit upon. Now Clovis would like to sit upon that saddle ; so he wishes you to open your gates and let him into your island, for Clovis will ride behind no man."

The Governor was perplexed. He said to the Franks : "Sit down, rest, and eat, and I will send for Geneviève." Then the Franks said to one another : "Now we shall see how the men of Paris feast." The cook came in, bearing dishes and jugs. But he only brought stale

bread, and bad beer, and bad butter. For he said : "What does it matter? They are only barbarians."

The Franks were large men, and hungry. They ate up the bread, bad as it was, and they drank the beer, bad as it was. One looked at the butter and said : "This is fit for no man's food ; but everything has its uses." With his knife he cut off a piece, and anointed his hair with it, until it fell into smooth locks.

Then they took the cook by the beard, and shook his head about. Then they lifted him up in their arms. Evil would it have been for that cook that day!

But there came through the house a little old woman. She said straight to the Franks : "Set him down." So they did. The cook was all trembling and shaking. Then she looked at him severely and said : "Your pots are boiling ; you have good bread, and meat, and wine. Feed these guests well. Do you not see they are large and hungry men ?" For Geneviève knew from her youth what the Franks liked.

So the cook served them with all his best meat, and onions, and beans, and wine, and honey cakes. Afterward he sat down quite tired and said : "If I had a hundred hands I could not serve fast enough ; for one mouth of these Franks eats up more than a hundred mouths of ordinary men !"

Meantime Geneviève and the Governor and the leader of the Franks talked together. The Governor said apart to Geneviève : "We had better let Clovis in ; he is a strong king and may hurt us if we do not." But she said : "Sir, my advice is, that we answer Clovis and refuse. For he is not a Christian and he shows little mercy ; it would not be safe for our people if he came here." "What shall we say ?" said the Governor. "May I say ?" said Geneviève. "Yes," said he.

Then little old Geneviève said to the Frank : "Sir, say to your King : If he wants to ride the horse, he must first get on it. But the Huns, though they ride well, could not mount this horse."

When the leader reported this to Clovis he said : "Was it a woman that said this ?" "Yes," said the messenger. "Then," said Clovis, "she was a right wise woman and a crafty councillor. For well I know that I can never mount that horse unless it is tame."

For he knew that if the citizens shut their gates and knock down their bridges he could never enter Paris.

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Clovis was a great fighter and a great leader. When he came back from war his men carried much spoil and sang songs of victory.

Once they came back to their homesteads along a forest track. Their cloaks, with purple and green fringes, fluttered in the wind. They sang aloud :

“Battle-weary wend we back:
Holdrahè, holdrahò !
Blunt the blade, and full the sack :
Holdrahè, dra, ho !
Odin looked out from his hall :
Holdrahè, holdrahò !
Looked and laughed on heroes all :
Holdra, he, dra, ho !”

Many a man carried on his shoulder a bulky sack, which went clink, clink, against the hilt of the long sword hanging by his side. The sacks were full of the plunder of many a church and many a village.

Last came Clovis. He was taller by a head than the rest. His hair hung down in yellow locks. His face was fair. His eyes were keener than arrows ; few men were so bold as to look straight into them.

His purple tunic was fastened with a brooch of gold. Men said he had won it from a witch in fair fight. Buckled across his shoulders he had a skin, as a cloak, as white and soft as snow. Men said that he had fought with a white monster, of prodigious size, a whole night long, at midwinter, and at last had slain it.

As they marched along, Clovis was the first

to turn his head, for he was quick of hearing as a hare. He held up his hand and they all stopped. "Who is this that comes hastening behind us?" he said. They looked back. Then came with all haste along the track an old man.

Those who marched behind Clovis stopped the old man. He said: "Be ye Franks?" They said: "Yes." He said: "Clovis, your King: I must speak to him."

Clovis said to the old man: "Who are you?" The old man looked straight at the King, and said: "I come from the bishop of these parts. You have robbed his churches and robbed his people. You have shown no mercy, and have done very evilly. The bishop says you are welcome to take the silver from his church, but he beseeches you to give him back the great basin, for in it the newly made Christians dip, and are made clean."

Clovis looked at him, and said nothing. The Franks would readily have killed him for his boldness. Then Clovis said: "Follow me to my hall. I shall divide by lot all the spoil. If that basin, which the bishop asks for, falls to me by lot, I shall do as he wishes."

After long marching they came to the hall of the King, and the other homesteads round it, and the green, grassy place where the spoil was to be divided. Each man emptied his sack: out came tumbling silver dishes and silver jugs, and

pots of brass, and drinking cups and horns shod with brass. All these were parted into heaps. The heaps were as many in number as the men. Clovis stood ready to throw the dice. But first he said : "Warriors, I ask one boon of you. Give me, over and above the heap that falls to me by lot, that basin of silver. Do not deny me this." The oldest warrior said : "King, not only this treasure, but all of us, are yours. Do as you please with what is yours." The others clashed their axes upon their shields. But one man, young and little, shouted : "King, you shall have nothing but what falls to you by lot. Let the basin be divided."

He swung his war-axe up, and crashed it down upon the basin. Deep bit the axe into the side of the basin. Crashing the axe fell, and bit again. The basin was scattered in pieces.

The Frank warriors stood stock-still, like stones. They waited.

Clovis said : "Gather up the pieces." Then he called to the old man and said : "Take your basin. The King sends it back to the bishop."

Clovis turned away and left that place.

Then all the warriors blamed the young man with the harshest words they could think of. One said : "You have a fox's ungrateful mind." Another said : "The tongue of a lion, truly, and

the courage of a hare. Backward in battle and forward in mischief wert thou ever."

Soon after the warriors of the Franks all met in an open place, so that each man could show his weapons to the King. Each man polished his long sword, and sharpened his war-axe, and looked to the bright iron head of his lance.

Clovis passed along the lines. The sun shone on his axe-head as it swung in his belt. He paid attention to each man, and gave praise or blame. At last he came to the young man who had smitten the basin. To him he said: "No man's weapons are foul with dirt save yours. Neither your sword, nor lance, nor axe are fit for use." Stretching out his hand, he pulled the young man's axe from his belt and flung it on the ground.

The young man was ashamed, and stooped to pick it up. Then, quick as light, the King swung his own axe above his head, and brought it down with a crash, crying: "Thus didst thou smite the basin, at the dividing of the spoil." And his axe bit so sharply that the young man fell dead.

Then all the Frankish warriors were mightily afraid of Clovis.

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Now at home, in the hall, the wife of Clovis sat with her maids. She spun flax into linen for

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tunics, and brewed the mead. She came from a distant land, and she was a Christian.

After a time she had a little baby, a boy. Clovis came to see his son, lying in his cradle by his mother's bed. He was well pleased, and said : "Ah, boy, one day thou shalt be a warrior. Grow fast, so that thou mayst soon stand by me in the battle."

His mother was terrified when she heard this. She said : "O Clovis, let me, I pray you, send for my priest, whom I have not seen for so long, and let me have my son made a Christian." Clovis said : "Odin needs warriors, and every son of mine shall be one of Odin's heroes." But she begged and prayed so, that at last Clovis said : "Well, be it as you wish."

Then the wife sent joyfully to her priest, many days' journey through the forest. She put a long white linen robe on her little baby. When the priest came she carried her son to church, and the priest christened him Ingomar. But the little baby cried piteously. He lay in his cradle, and grew white and thin, and cried on and on. And within a few days he died.

Then Clovis turned to the Queen, and said in great anger : "It is you who have brought this upon your son, and upon me. If I had given the child to my gods he would surely have lived."

Some time after the Queen had another little

baby, a boy. Long she begged, and hard she begged, but Clovis would not allow the child to be christened.

But at last the Queen besought him so that he said yes. So the priest christened the little baby Chlodemer. But soon, as he lay in the cradle, in the robe of fine white linen, he began to cry piteously. He lay in the cradle and grew thin and white. Clovis came to see him, and saw how thin he was, and heard how he cried on and on. Then he turned to the Queen and said fiercely : " You are to blame for this ; he will die as his brother died. Was it not enough that one should be christened, and die ? " And he went out, full of anger.

The Queen threw herself down on her knees beside the cradle, and would not move. The room became quite dark, and there she was, all alone, crying, and saying prayers. And sometimes she got up to do what was needed for the baby ; but there she was, all night long.

Very early in the morning the light began to come creeping in. The Queen peered into the cradle. Lo and behold ! there the little baby was fast asleep, quite warm and comfortable. From that hour he got better. Soon he was fat and rosy.

Not long after this Clovis was christened and became a Christian.

When Geneviève heard of this, in Paris, she

said : "Now Clovis has found out how to tame the horse, for now he will not use the whip of cruelty."

Soon after the people of Paris opened their gates to Clovis. He came riding through the gate, on to the island. He said : "Who is your chief man ?" All the people shouted : "Geneviève ! Geneviève ! "

So the King honoured Geneviève. Soon both he and his wife loved Geneviève well.

Clovis lived in the city, on the island. Outside the walls, on the bank, he built a church. "Here," he said, "will I be buried, and my wife, and Geneviève, whom we both love, and I will that this church be called after Saint Peter and Saint Paul."

In course of time Clovis died, and then Geneviève, and then the Queen. And they were buried in the church. Everything was done as the King had ordered. But also one thing was done which he had not ordered. The people soon forgot to call the church after Saint Peter and Saint Paul. They called it after their friend Geneviève—the Church of Saint Geneviève, who saved Paris from the Huns.

IX

COLUMBA

AEDH, son of Ainmire, dwelt in Ireland in the land of his tribe, the northern Hy Niall. Aedh was chosen chief by the men of the tribe. Of the land of the tribe he had the best part. He took from the tribe their taxes of honey and wax and fish and ale. So he was a rich king, and all his houses were full of rich stores. Of his houses none was better than one. This one was called 'The House in the Oak Wood,' or, in the Irish language, *Derry*. This house was a true royal house; it had all that a royal house should have. This was the form of it. Up the hillside, through the oak-tree wood, along the track of the chariots, first was a grassy bank, as high as a man. It ran round in a circle. Within there was a second grassy bank, as high as a man. It ran round in a circle. Within that there was a ditch full of water, like a ring. Within that there was a third grassy bank, as high as a man. Within that the King had his booths—one for sleeping, and one for cooking, and one for eating. The last was a fair hall. Great posts

of oak were planted in the earth. Branches of alder were planted between. Slender branches were twisted in and out lengthwise. It had a door to the east and a door to the west. Within boards covered the walls, painted red and painted green. Round the room was a couch, all the way round. Many men sat there on the soft rugs. In the middle burnt a fire, and its pleasant smell filled the hall.

To be in the House in the Oak Wood, to hunt, and to play was all the King's pleasure. But to hold council, or to go to war, he dwelt in his great stone fort called Aillech.

Derry was full and overflowing with the King's treasure.

Among the King's guests came one day a chief poet with all his lesser poets, thirty in all, each with his little harp in his hand. The same day there came a poor holy man, with his horned staff of oak, with his grey tunic and hood, with his legs all bare and his sandals all full of the cold rain-water of the roads. The poet said his name, the King welcomed him with great joy —what king was there in old Ireland who did not?

The little poor holy man said to the King: "I am of thy tribe and of thy family, for I and thy father were the sons of brothers, and those brothers were the sons of King Fergus of the North." King Aedh said: "What is your

name?" The poor holy man said: "I am Columba."

King Aedh said: "If you were only my cousin, you should have everything that a blood relation of King Fergus should have. But since you are Columba, whose name all men know, I will give you over and above whatsoever you ask." Columba said: "Give me, then, a house for me and those who are with me." He had come quite alone. No one knew what he meant. But the King thought he had never seen a man who pleased him so well. Moved greatly in his mind, he said: "I give you this house and all that is in it, down to each blade of grass on the three grassy banks, and each drop of water in the ditch."

Little knew the King to whom he had given his house! Afterward, when the tribe knew that he had given Derry to Columba, all said that he had done well to give it to Columba, the holy man of the tribe.

The King and all his men rode through the woods to the great stone fort called Aillech. They rode and ran through the woods, ten thousand trees on the right hand and ten thousand trees on the left hand, until at last they came to Aillech. Then one pulled the King by the cloak, and said: "O King, look behind." Aedh saw the tree-tops like the

waves of the sea, and the hills, nine times nine in number; and on the hill of Derry he saw a black cloud of smoke. "What can have happened?" cried he. "Can pirates have come already in their long black boats, looking for spoil?" Then he said to his swiftest man: "Run like the wind, find out what you can, and, if it is possible, bring back my Columba."

After nightfall there came Columba himself into the hall. Then King Aedh started up and welcomed him, and said: "Whatsoever harm you have suffered, I will make good, and nine times more, for neither hunger nor thirst, the two makers of sorrow, shall plague you." Columba said: "I myself set light to the houses, and all that was in them." King Aedh grew red in his face, and for a moment he said nothing, but then he spake in great anger: "That was a foolish deed, for if you had not burnt it, there would be plenty of food and drink for you in it." Then Columba was angry and said: "No one shall be a night there fasting against his will." No more he said at that time.

Columba went back to Derry, and began to build a church on the burnt ground within the three grassy banks. On the first day he cut down an oak to be the post of the door. On the first day one holy man came to him and said:

“Let me work with you, O Columba, and live with you here.” Columba said : “I have only a slice of fish from the river, and half a barley-cake for bread, and water for ale. Are you content?” “Yes, indeed,” said the holy man. On the second day the two cut an oak for the other door-post, and a small oak for the top of the door. On the second day two holy men came to Columba, and said : “Let us be your monks, O Columba, and work with you.” Columba said : “To-day we have finished our barley-cake ; we have each a slice of salmon from the river, and water for ale ; are you content?” They answered : “Content and willing.”

The next day came three, and the next four, and the next five, and the next six. All these holy men said : “Content and willing.” Any man that answered otherwise, him Columba would not have, for he knew that he was not suitable. No man remained in Derry even a single night fasting against his will. So in this way what Columba had said to King Aedh came true in every letter.

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Soon in the grassy plain with the three banks the oak posts of the church stood up like the masts of a ship : six great posts along one side, six great posts along the other, the door-posts in the middle of the end. Then Columba sent

his monks out into the wood to gather wattles. They picked them long, and they made them smooth with their knives and twisted them in and out and in and out until the walls were wattled above a man's height from the ground. Soon all was complete. But the priest needed a book.

Then Columba sent for skins of calves. He took them and made from them parchment as white as milk. He walked in the woods and in the fields, and carefully took the feathers of the black crow in the woods and the feathers of the grey goose in the fields. Then he cut the quill of the feather in this way: a cross-cut on one side to sharpen the point, a cut on the other side to sharpen the point, then a long cut up the point. Then he went into the woods, and took green berries from the holly, and brown galls from the oak. These he boiled with gum and with soot from the fire. Thus he made ink.

And as he wrote he sang:

“Nothing I love so well
As these three things—
One in the leafy wood,
One in my little hut,
One in our dear little church.

“One is, to pick berries from the holly,
One is, to write until my hand is weary,
One is, to hear the wise words come clearly
From the tongue of a good reader!”

On the twelfth day Columba finished the book. So the church at Derry was complete.

For many years Columba lived at Derry, and many great things he did there.

He went all round the land, walking with his oak staff in his hand. Everywhere he saw men building churches with oak and wattles. Everywhere the people received him with joy. Everywhere monks sat in their cells.

When he came home to Derry and looked inland he said: "This land I know, and this land has good teaching."

Then he looked out beyond the lake and beyond to sea, and he saw the rough, tumbling waves. He said: "In the land beyond the rough waves of the sea, what state is there?" He saw the birds fly over the lake, and out to sea. He said: "The birds fly thither and I shall follow. I am going to the heathen land of Alban, across the sea."

Then with twelve of his companions he set foot in his coracle, his little boat of basket-work. They rowed down the river and across the lake. A crane was fishing, standing on one leg, where the rushes stood in the water. When the crane saw the holy man, it unfolded its wings and flapped them and rose up and flew forth over the lake and over the tumbling waves out to sea.

Columba said : "The crane is showing us the way." And he looked back to the land of Derry and sang :

"How rapid the speed of my coracle,
And its stern turned upon Derry !
I grieve at my errand over the sea,
Travelling to Alban.

"There is a grey eye
That looks back upon Erin :
Large is the tear of my soft grey eye
When I look back upon Erin."

After they had rowed and sailed for two days and two nights they could see only a blue line behind them, the tops of the hills of Ireland. They passed an island called Colonsay. Columba steered, leaving it on the right hand. They continued another day and a night. Behind them they saw nothing but the tumbling waves of the sea. In front they saw the sea covered with many islands, some far and some near, some hilly and stony, some flat and green. The water between the islands flowed with a strong current. "Pull, brothers," said Columba, "for we must make this channel." They steered the boat into the channel. It was so narrow that a man shouting on one side could be heard on the other. On the left side lay an island of moderate size, and the sun shone full upon it. On the right hand lay a great island full of rugged hills. In the hills lay the white mist and the dark

cloud. From the rocks and caves of the dark island came a barking sound. They beached their boats on the shore to the left. "How shall we know if this is the place?" said the rowers. Columba said: "I shall know well enough."

Columba went up the beach and across the grass and up the grassy hillocks and up the stony rocks with his face to the wind. There he stood and looked at the sea. The monks could see nothing right away to the horizon but the tumbling waves of the sea. Then Columba said: "Pick up these stones and make a great mound in the Irish fashion, for this place is our place." And he called the name of the mound 'The Mound of the back turned to Ireland.'

Going down from the rocky hills, they came to a low plain where the grass was very sweet and full of thyme and clover. Through the middle ran a little stream, big enough to turn a mill-wheel. It ran from a lake to the sea. Columba and his monks waded through the stream, and beyond it they found a flat green place with the sea on the right hand and great big rocks on the left hand, and behind them the stream. And on that flat place the monks built their dwellings. First they built their church, all of oak logs, and next they built their mill, and a barn beside it. Then they built a booth to eat in. A fire burned in the middle and a great stone served as a table; and that

stone is there to this day. Then each man built a little hut for himself in a square, and a booth for guests to sleep in. Last of all they built a wooden hut for Columba. Then from the mill-stream round the whole they dug a great bank of earth and stones.

Columba divided the brethren. The elder he called seniors. To them he gave the charge of the church and of the books and of writing. The younger he called the working brothers. To them he gave the charge of the fields and of the barn and of the mill.

* * * *

One day the working brothers came to Columba and said: "All the food which we brought is eaten; what shall we do?"

Columba said: "Go to the rocks, and walk barefoot right out to where the waves wash in and out among the cracks. There you will find meat and vegetables." When they got there they found periwinkles and limpets and mussels in plenty. "This is the meat," said one; "where is the vegetable?" Then they went peeping and peering into the rock-pools. "This is it," said one. "I have seen such weed growing on the rocks in sweet Ireland, and eaten it in my youth." Then they pulled the seaweed off the rocks, and so were fed.

All this time Columba went walking over

the mountains on the other islands, among the pagan people, teaching them with might and main.

One day the working brethren came again to him and said: "Father, we need some meat, and as yet we have no sheep." Columba said to two of them: "Take your little boat of basket-work, and your knives; go to the dark island, whence the sound of barking came, and go straight to that sound. There you will find the pastures, and the sheep of the sea. But kill mercifully, and no more than you need."

The brethren did not know what Columba meant by the sheep of the sea. Also, they were rather frightened, because they thought the barking might come from strange monsters, or even fairies. Nevertheless they went, for they knew that Columba knew more of the sea than all of them.

There upon the shore of the dark island they saw creatures lying between the land and the sea. They had smooth, shiny heads like dogs, and whiskers like men, and fat, shiny bodies. Upon the land they crawled like men going upon their elbows. Over the rocks they pushed themselves with their front fins; from a high place into the water they dived; the spray danced up; in the water the creatures swam like fish. They called to one another with a

barking sound. These were the seals, the sheep of the sea.

Out in the channel, surrounded by the waves on all sides, was a low, rocky island, with a sandy beach. On it lay the mother seals and the little seals. The waves came up and covered them, and ran back off their shiny coats. There the mother seals brought up their families.

When the brothers told Columba and the rest what they had seen, it was agreed that they should go regularly to fetch as much seal-meat as they required, and no more.

Meantime the pagan people began to give Columba many presents. They gave him some cows, and many sheep. The holy men built a cowshed outside the bank of stones and earth. Twice a day one went to milk the cows. Pouring the milk into two great wooden pails, he slung them on a white horse, one pail on one side and one pail on the other side. The white horse bore them to the monastery.

One day the brethren went as usual to the seal-pastures. When they came back they ran to Columba in his hut, where he sat writing. "O Father," they said, "our seals have been cruelly treated. Some one has come and killed some, and left them lying all dead upon the beach."

Then the brethren looked out all day, to see if any boat went to the island. But they saw

nothing but the waves, and the sand-hills covered with grass, as withered and brown as hay.

Nevertheless, the next day again, the seals were killed and wasted.

At this time there was living in the island of Colonsay a man named Erc, the son of Ua. Very rough he was, and foxy-haired, and small-eyed. He knew all the channels as well as if he were a fish. He was a sea-robber and a land-robber. He loved the fat meat of seals and he was always hungry.

Now Erc, the son of Ua, had found the pastures of the seals belonging by right to the holy men. To go openly by day he dared not; for he feared the holy men, and thought that they might kill him. But he could not come from Colonsay and go back under cover of one night.

Nevertheless he thought of a way. By craft he did it. When the brethren looked out, and watched all the day, they saw Erc. Little did they know what he was doing. Twice he filled his boat with seal-meat, and twice he came back. The holy men saw his boat twice, and three times, and yet they did not know what it was. This was a riddle!

But by the third time Columba knew all the truth, for he had keen eyes, and a keen mind, and he could guess a riddle, how hard soever it

was. He saw what the brethren did not see, and he knew where Erc was, and what he was doing, and he was not willing that it should go on.

So he called two of the brethren and said : "Pass over now to the island and in the fields near the sea seek out the robber Erc. Last night he came alone secretly from the island of Colonsay.

"Willingly, O Father," said they ; "but tell us how he has hidden himself from us and all our eyes, for no boat could lie on that beach without our seeing it." "He comes only by night. Through the day he lies hidden under his boat, which he has turned upside down, covered with hay among the sand-hills, so that by night he may sail over to the little island where the seals, ours by right, breed, that, greedy and very thievish as he is, he may fill his boat with them after savagely killing them and go back to his dwelling."

Then, much astonished, they went away, one saying to the other : "Much would I like to know how Columba knows this." Then they found on the bank of the dark island a thing that looked like a haystack in the fields by the sea. They felt underneath, and felt something like the edge of a boat. They lifted it up with a mighty heave, and lo ! there was Erc, lying at full length underneath. And so

they took him easily and brought him to Columba.

Then Columba looked at him and said : " Why dost thou break God's rule, and often steal the goods of others ? When thou art in want, come to us, and ask us, and thou shalt receive all the necessaries thou shalt ask for." Then he ordered good mutton to be given to Erc, in place of the seal-meat, so that he should not go home with his boat empty.

Ever after this Columba was fond of Erc. Seeing that he was always hungry, Columba often sent him a sheep or a measure of corn, so that he should not steal. This he did to his dying day.

* * * * *

One day, at sunrise, Columba was walking on the shore with one of the young men. The wind was strong from the sea, and beat the waves, which came in like prancing white horses.

Columba said : " On the third day from this now dawning thou must keep a look-out on the western part of the island, sitting on the sea-shore, for a crane, driven by the wind, will arrive, very weary, after the ninth hour of the day. It will fall down exhausted, and you must pick it up kindly and carry it to our guest-house. You must look after it for three days and nights and feed it carefully. I commend

it to you because it comes from our own native land."

Columba said this because he knew the ways of the birds, and the times of their flight, and he understood also the winds.

The brother obeyed. He waited on the shore the first day and the second day. Cold it was and wet it was ; the wind blew through his hood ; he shivered and he shook ; the spray from the waves wetted him.

Nevertheless, on the third day again he waited until the ninth hour of the day. Then there fell down on the shore a crane, quite tired out and at the point of death. The brother picked it up, carried it to the guest-house, and fed it. For three days he tended it carefully. Then on the third day the wind had fallen, and the sea was calm and the sun was warm. Then the crane unfolded its wings and flapped them and raised itself in the air, with its long legs stretched straight behind. It circled, considering its course in the air, and then returned across the sea to Ireland in a straight line of flight.

Columba made Christian many wild tribes of those parts, and their kings. The kings of Ireland and the kings of Alban did as Columba bade them. For the most part they did so, except in the matter of Scannlan the Hostage.

This matter came about in this way. King

Aedh, son of Ainmire, was long at enmity with the King of Ossory. At last King Aedh said : "Let there be peace between me and Ossory, if the King will give me his son to keep for one year as a hostage." This was told to the King of Ossory. He said : "King Aedh is a fierce and cruel man ; if I let my son Scannlan go, shall I ever see him alive again?" His councillors said : "Scannlan your son could go and return safe and sound if Columba would be surety for him."

Then both the kings sent messengers to Columba, to propose it. Columba was glad, and blessed the two kings for their peaceful dispositions, and undertook gladly on these terms : that Scannlan should be kept for a year, no more and no less, by King Aedh, as a hostage, without danger or pain, unless his father broke the peace. With this the messengers went back to Ireland.

At a year's end strangers came from Ireland to Columba. He said : "The day is past when Scannlan should have gone back to his father. Is Ossory now still at peace with King Aedh ?" The strangers said : "At peace indeed, but never the better for that. For Scannlan the Hostage is still kept by King Aedh, and worse treated and tormented than a slave." Columba changed colour, for he saw that Aedh had deceived him. He wept all the night long.

At dawn he took his boat, and set forth for Ireland.

King Aedh was at his house on the long mound of Drumceatt, within sight of the hill of Derry. Many kings were with him there. Columba came in before them all. He said : "Three boons I beg of you, King Aedh." He asked the first, and it was granted. He asked the second, and it was granted. He asked the third : "Release Scannlan." "I shall not release Scannlan," said King Aedh, "until he dies in the hut in which he is." Then Columba was very angry and answered : "We will speak no more of this matter ; nevertheless, if God will, Scannlan will come to me this very night." All those standing round heard it. Some thought one way, some another. Some talked of it, but others kept silence.

Columba went out of the hall. In the grassy space within two banks there was the place where Scannlan was kept captive. This was the manner of it. A round wicker hut stood there, with no opening to be seen but one, and that one small. The door was on the other side, shut and tied up with a leather thong. Round the hut were fifty warriors guarding it. The shadow of Columba fell upon the opening, and a moaning voice came out saying : "A drink !" Then again it said : "A drink !"

Columba said : "Who is it in here ?" The

guards said : "Scannlan." He asked : "Why does he say 'A drink'?" They said : "Once a day, O Father, we put through that opening a small piece of salt meat, and a small pot of drink. The salt makes him thirsty and he cannot quench his thirst."

Columba went straight to the opening. He heard the chains on Scannlan go clink, clink. He said : "Scannlan, my son, be not cast down, but rather rejoice and take courage, for thou shalt yet be a king among thine own tribe." All those standing by heard it, and Columba with his voice like a trumpet.

Then Columba went off with mighty strides, to his own church at Derry.

The guards lay in the afternoon and drank long draughts of cool ale, as much as they would. But Scannlan's drink would not so much as fill his mouth once.

At midday a great cloud arose, and it grew dark and cold. Then the thunder burst forth, and men could scarcely see their neighbours' faces. In the worst of the storm the guards, all confused in mind, saw two men in their midst, who seemed to come from round Scannlan's hut. A guard said : "Who is that you have with you?" The first man said in a merry voice : "Scannlan the Hostage!" Even in the storm the guards laughed at this.

All day and all night they guarded the hut

very carefully. Well might they guard it, empty as it was !

The man led Scannlan outside the three grassy banks and said : "Follow the track and go to Columba at Derry." Scannlan said never a word of thanks, for he was half crazy, but he went on and on until the track stopped at the church door of Derry ; so, it being open, in he went, and there was a priest in his robes at the altar. This was Columba.

Columba saw the poor creature, all thin and dirty. "Who is this ?" said he. "Scannlan," answered the other. "Hast thou any news ?" said Columba. "A drink !" said he. "Hast thou brought us a blessing ?" "A drink !" said he. "Say how camest thou ?" "A drink !" said he. Then Columba said : "Here then is a drink for thee," and sent and gave him a vessel of drink, enough for three, and good bacon, and ten wheaten cakes. When Scannlan had eaten all up, even the crumbs, he lay down and slept for three days and three nights in one sleep. So say the men of those days. Then Scannlan was restored in mind. Columba sent Scannlan to his father, the King of Ossory, as good as when he came from thence.

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The kings of Alban came to Columba so that he might advise them who should be the chief

High King. The man whom he chose, him did the kings of Alban choose. Thus Columba arranged all affairs in those parts, in the best way, so far as he was able.

After years and years Columba grew old. It was now the spring, after Easter. On a Saturday morning Columba laid down his pen, took his oaken staff, and walked out. He walked down from his cell, past the church, and the huts of the brothers, and across the fields, all the way to the mill, and the granary, and the stream. He looked into the granary. There were two great heaps of corn on the floor. "Good it is," said Columba, "that there is all this corn. My monks will have plenty when I go away." The young man who was with him did not understand this. Then Columba left the granary, and walked back, across the fields, a little uphill. Half-way back he sat down to rest upon a large stone that lay in the turf. He looked at the islands and the sea, and the horses and cows grazing.

While Columba was sitting there behold the white horse, a faithful servant, ran up to him. This was the horse that used to carry the milk-pails to and fro between the cow-shed and the monastery. He, coming up to Columba, wonderful to tell, laid his head on Columba's breast. Then he began to whinny and to shed tears on to the saint's lap. The young brother, seeing

this, got up and began to push the horse away. But Columba forbade him, saying: "Let him alone, let him alone, for he loves me, and he knows that his master is going to leave him." So saying, he blessed his servant the horse, as it turned sadly to go away.

And after that, at midnight, Columba died. All the land of Alban mourned for him, because he had taught them so well.

This was the year in which men from Rome first came to the heathen of England to teach them.

X

CUTHBERT

AFTER Columba died his monks went far and wide over the land of Alban, and even farther, to the land of England. Long before, men had called this land Britain. But the English had come from over the sea, and had driven the Britons away.

Many kings ruled over the English in different parts of the land. Egfrid, the King of Northumbria, was the greatest of them all. His land was peaceful, for he had conquered all his enemies in battle. But the country was still very wild, and empty of people. Among what people there were, some were Christians, and some believed in Thor and Odin.

In Northumbria there was a holy man called Cuthbert. He was only moderately tall. His arms and shoulders were strong, but he walked lamely, because one of his legs always hurt him. His eyes were bright and shining and he talked to men so that they wanted to talk to him. Cuthbert went all about the country. He even went up to the people who lived here and there in the hills. Men said that witches and bad

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spirits lived in the hills, and they were afraid, except Cuthbert.

One day a man came to Cuthbert and said : "In a village that I know in the hills, when the men drink, they make the sign of a hammer with their thumbs over the cup, to ask Thor, the god, to make them strong. And when a great illness and sickness came to the village they made little hammers of wood and wore them tied round their necks, so that Thor might keep away the disease." Cuthbert answered : "If they do not know perfectly what they ought to do, I will go and tell them the right way."

So Cuthbert set out. He had a boy with him fifteen or sixteen years old. On and on they walked, over hills and dales. The morning passed and the afternoon, and they had had nothing to eat. At last Cuthbert said : "Where shall we stop for dinner ? Do you know of any house on the road where we could ask for it ?" The boy answered : "I was just thinking about it, but I do not know of any houses, and we have such a long way to go still. Indeed, I don't know how we shall get there without something to eat !" For by now he was very hungry. Cuthbert laughed, and said : "God will not let us die of hunger !"

Now, far off, Cuthbert had already seen something. He had seen a little dark speck, flying far above them in the sky. Only one kind of

bird flies so high. Cuthbert said : "Do you see that eagle ? God could feed us even by means of that eagle !" They walked along the grassy track, down toward a little river that ran across it. There were stones in the river by which they could cross. When they came there, walking in silence, there was the eagle, the great brown bird, perched upon a stone by the waterside. Cuthbert saw her first, he could see her long curved beak, and her yellow feet upon the stone. But then she unfolded her wings, and rose slowly up into the air. Cuthbert said to the boy: "Look, look ! There is our servant, the eagle. Go quickly and see what she has brought us." The boy waded up the stream. He trod on the stones and sometimes went deeper than he meant. There, on the eagle's stone, lay a fish, as long as two hands. It was all wet and shining and slippery.

The lad knew by the orange spots on the fish that it was good to eat, and so he took it, well contented. But Cuthbert was not pleased, and said : "What have you done, my son ? Why have you not given part to our servant ? Cut the fish into two pieces, and give her one. She has served us well, and certainly deserves that !"

The boy had an iron knife hanging from his belt. He cut the fish in half, and waded back and laid the half upon the eagle's stone. They had not walked more than half an hour more,

when they saw a few houses under a hill. So they got their fish cooked, and they had an excellent dinner that day.

When Cuthbert reached the village he taught the people so well that they burnt their little hammers and forsook their foolish ways.

Then Cuthbert returned to his home at Lindisfarne, or, as most men called it, Holy Island. After some days' walking he came down to the sea. There lay Holy Island, a little way out, and between the island and the shore the yellow sands, all wet and shining, for it was just after low tide. It was lucky to have come at low tide, when they could walk across. They went down to the shore, sinking into the dry sand. Then began the wet sand. They went splashing over it, making for a post stuck up in the sand; for to either side there were dangerous places and sands that swallowed men up. The post was covered with wet seaweed, and barnacles, and it had a little pool of water round the bottom. It was the first of a row of posts. Cuthbert and the boy knew the way well. Soon they came to the little harbour and the sandy shore of Holy Island. All the brethren were very glad to see Cuthbert and to hear his tale. Meantime the waves crept up and crept up. At high tide even the posts were quite covered, and Holy Island was really an island.

When Cuthbert walked upon the shore of

Holy Island he could see the coast, and a great rocky hill, and upon it a burg with a wooden wall round it. This burg was the dwelling-place of King Egfrid. It was and is called Bamburgh. Farther down the coast, and away out to sea, he could see certain islands, small and far off. They did not look yellow and sandy, but dark and rocky and black. No one lived on them. No boat ever rowed near them. People said : "Bad spirits and dark witches live there, so wise men will keep away." Now Cuthbert told the other holy men that he would go and live there, all alone. So they blessed him, and gave him a boat and food.

So he rowed away and turned out to sea. He came close up to the first island. Its sides rose straight up out of deep water, about as high as a house. The rock was grey as iron, full of little shelf-like ledges and deep clefts where heather was growing. On every ledge white sea-birds were perching and playing. Cuthbert rowed round the island. On the other side a sandy shore sloped down. So he landed there. He looked about for a place for a house. The upper end of the island was hard rock, as bare as the winds could blow it. Nothing lived there but the sea-gulls. The lower end was sandy; grass grew there, with large stones scattered about. Little white campions grew also, and yellow stone-crop.

Here Cuthbert found a place. Some rocks jutted out into the sea. On the land side the rocks made a curve like the back of a chair. The ground within was sandy. Cuthbert dug out the sand, and soon came to the rock, which he swept bare and clean. Then he took a great stone from the shore, and laid it upon the rock. He put another close to it, and filled up the gaps with grass from the shore. So he went right round the place, always choosing stones that fitted together fairly well, and wedging grass between them. Thus he built the wall round and round, as high as he could reach. Then he roofed the enclosed place with sticks and grass. Then he divided the house into two with a wall. One part was his room, to live in. One part was like a little church. Cuthbert said his prayers there. When he was in his house he could hear the sea breaking almost underneath him. The spray fell like rain on the roof.

Cuthbert and the sea-birds lived on the island. Some of the birds were gulls, with white wings and black backs. Others were quite black. These could dive, and swim under water like fish. Others were brown, and looked like ducks. They lined their nests with the softest down from under their feathers. They are called eider-ducks. None of them were afraid of Cuthbert. One eider-duck made her nest under

the wall of his house every year for seven years.

The brethren often rowed from Holy Island to see Cuthbert. Once he said to them : "I beg you bring me some barley-seed. Perhaps it may grow here. If it does not, I had better come back to the monastery ; it would be better to do that than to be supported here by the labour of others." The next time the holy men brought the barley with them, and Cuthbert dug his field and sowed it.

The barley came up marvellously well. The stems had heavy heads of grain, and long prickly beards. When the wind blew over the sea all the barley beards wagged.

Now the sea-gulls found out that the barley was good to eat, although they had never seen such a thing before. They hovered over the field, and ran about in it, breaking down the stems, and pecking and pecking the grains out with their sharp beaks. They made their loud cry.

Cuthbert heard them in his house. He came to the field. There was the barley all broken, and the birds in it. He said in a loud voice : "Why do you touch that which you have not sown ? Have you more share in this barley-field than I ? Get you gone, and do no more injury to that which belongs to another !"

As he spoke, lo and behold ! the birds all rose

up from the field, flapping their wings. Some alighted in the water, and some on the shore. But those were the proper places for them, in which to find their food.

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Now it happened, on the mainland, that the Bishop of that part died. Cuthbert was chosen to be Bishop. But Cuthbert would not come. At last King Egfrid came in his great ship from Bamburgh, and entreated Cuthbert to come. And Cuthbert yielded to his advice, for it was good. So he became Bishop.

Three months after King Egfrid called Cuthbert to him, and told him that he meant to go to fight, far in the north. Cuthbert begged him not to go, for, he said, he was sure that the end would be evil. But Egfrid would not heed his advice. He went northward, and many of the men of the country with him.

As Cuthbert was walking, one day, he stopped to rest, leaning on his staff. All of a sudden he cried out: "Now the battle is decided." No one who heard it knew what he meant. On the third day after that came a man, without sword or shield. He said: "I and it may be a few others only have escaped. The King's men were surrounded by the enemy. They kept in a ring with shields touching, rim to rim. They kept their shield wall the round King, but one was

killed after the other, and then the King himself fell down."

Now after this there was no peace in Northumbria any more. But all the good deeds which Cuthbert did as Bishop among the people cannot be told, they were so many. For two years Cuthbert was Bishop.

At last Cuthbert began to feel a great pain in his breast, and it got always worse and worse. At Christmas time, in the second year, he went to Holy Island, and the brethren rowed him back to his own island. There they left him, as he wished. But as often as they could the brethren rowed over to see him. The sea was very rough, for the winter storms were blowing. For five days together they could not put a boat to sea. They were very unhappy, not knowing how Cuthbert was. On the fifth day, in great anxiety, they rowed over the tossing waves, and landed one of their number on Cuthbert's island. He hastened into the house. There sat Cuthbert on the stone seat. He was pale and thin and miserable to see.

The holy man said to him : "Why will you not let any of us come and wait on you?" Cuthbert answered : "When you were all gone, last time, I sat down here. From the moment of my sitting down to the present time, for five days and five nights, I have sat here without moving." "But how have you remained so long

without food?" said the brother. Upon which Cuthbert turned up the cover of the seat, and there lay five little onions concealed there, and he said: "This has been my food. Whenever my mouth was dry with thirst, I cooled it by tasting these." But when the brother looked more closely, he saw that only one was bitten a very little. Then he begged Cuthbert to let him stay and get him food, and look after him, and at last Cuthbert said he might.

Nevertheless the brethren on Holy Island knew now that Cuthbert would soon die and leave them. They said to one another: "Even so, what a blessing it would be to us to have Cuthbert's body in our church, in the midst of us all." They agreed that whoever was with Cuthbert when he died should at once hold up two candles on the shore, where they could be seen from Holy Island.

On Holy Island there is a high rock, round, and easy to climb. On it one of the holy men watched by night and by day. One night he saw two tiny little lights out at sea. Then he knew that Cuthbert was dead.

The holy men brought back the body of Cuthbert to Holy Island. They told the others: "Cuthbert left this message for us all. He said: 'Be kind, be hospitable, and be peaceful. And if ever you have to choose, I would rather that you should take up my body, and leave

these places, than consent in any way to live with wicked people.'"

Then they wrapped up Cuthbert's body in a fine silk robe, worked with flowers, and birds like the eider-ducks which they called 'Cuthbert's ducks.' They laid him in a wooden chest, fastened with a lock. Then they buried him in their church.

For many, many years neither the brethren on the island nor even the people on the mainland forgot Cuthbert. The brethren lived peacefully, and never thought that they would have to leave that place.

Almost two hundred years after Cuthbert had died the greatest misfortune happened that the people could think of, or had heard tell of. Men came in ships, over the sea, from the north and from the east. They came to the shore, and killed people, and burnt every house and every barn. So it went on year by year. They came ever nearer and nearer to Holy Island. At last the brethren could see the black smoke where houses were burning on the mainland.

Then the brethren assembled in haste. The eldest asked the others : "What shall we do?" Then they remembered Cuthbert's words. One said : "Let us take up Cuthbert's body, and leave this place." So they lifted the chest up, and carried it to the shore, and laid it in a boat. They took their most precious books, and got

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into the boats, and rowed away from the island. None of them ever saw the island again. Nor did any of them ever have a settled place to live in again. They wandered about. Sometimes they had Cuthbert's chest in a cart; sometimes they laid it in a boat; sometimes they carried it on their own shoulders. Thus for more than a hundred years they wandered about. But at last, after more than a hundred years, they found a high hill, overhanging a river, which flowed round the foot of the hill in a loop. There they built a wooden church, and made huts for themselves. They laid Cuthbert to rest in the church. His body lies in the same place to-day. The name of the city is Durham.

XI

STURMI

THE sons of Clovis, and his grandsons, and their sons, and their sons after, ruled over the Franks. They were the masters in the land. Some Franks lived under their rule so far east of Paris that a man might walk for two weeks before he came to their homes.

Once a monk travelled that way. His name was Boniface. His face was wrinkled and brown, with little eyes as sharp as needles. His black robe went fluttering and flapping. All the baggage that he carried with him was a little brown book in the bosom of his robe.

So he walked along and walked along, with his back turned to Paris. In the morning the sun shone full in his face. In the evening his shadow fell in front of him along the road, longer than he was himself.

At night he asked for shelter in a Frankish homestead. He said to the chief, as they sat on the bearskins on the bench: "How many days' journey is it still to the great river?" "Four days' journey," said the chief. "Beware,

holy father, of crossing that river." "Why?" said Boniface. "Beyond the river the land is bad, and unfit for an old man, and a peaceful." "How so?" said Boniface. "Because," said the chief, "beyond the river lie hills, and the Forest of Beeches, and the Forest of Birds, one behind the other, like the waves of the sea. Moreover, in the forests live the heathens called Saxons, and witches, and trolls, and evil spirits."

Boniface said nothing, but he smiled like a man who knows more than he says.

After four days Boniface stood on the top of a hill. He saw a valley, and in it a river. The river was so wide that no one could build a bridge across it. Even the birds hardly ever flew across it. Its water was yellow, like the water of the Tiber. But this river was ten times as wide, and swift, and strong.

That night Boniface slept in the hut of a fisherman, on the bank of the river. All through the night he could hear the river rushing.

Next day Boniface and the fisherman put off in the boat. They tugged and tugged at the oars. At last, with a mighty pull, they drove the boat against the muddy bank on the other side.

Boniface thanked the fisherman, jumped out of the boat, and walked away into the forest.

Meantime, one night, the great King of the Franks was in his hall. His men lay round the fire, and looked at the sword-play. The King said : "Send and find out where Boniface, my priest, is." The messengers came back quite frightened, and said : "Lord and King, Boniface, your priest, has gone across the great River Rhine. So a fisherman has told us." The King smote down his hand upon the bench and said : "Now my priest is lost and gone in very certainty. I have fought ten times against the Saxons, and killed a mighty many, and yet not conquered them, so fierce are they. If I hear nothing of Boniface within a year and a day, then you, warriors of the Franks, and I, will give him a mighty revenge."

The year went by. The cold autumn came. It was nearly Christmas, when the King of the Franks needed Boniface to say his service on Christmas morning.

One cold night, who should come into the hall but Boniface. Who then shouted for joy ? The King shouted, and so did they all.

When the noise was over, the King spoke to Boniface jokingly, for his heart was light : "For ten years, my father, have I fought with the Saxons, and not conquered them at all. How many hast thou conquered ?" Boniface said : "Here one, and there one." "And how many prisoners hast thou brought back ?" "Even

this one," said Boniface. "Stand forth, Sturmi, my son." A boy of seven years stepped forward from his side. He was tall, and fair in face; his feet and legs were quick and light for running, and his hands strong for bending the bow, or throwing the spear.

Boniface said: "Far to the southward, across the great river, live the parents of Sturmi. His father has given him to me, to be my son."

Then the King of the Franks said to Sturmi: "Sturmi, shall I send you back to your father?" Sturmi said: "My father Boniface is here, and I like to be with him." The King laughed and said: "Boniface will not be here for long. Soon he will go forth again, if I know him at all. What will you do then?" Sturmi said: "I too shall go to the river, and I shall row my boat across it, and I shall go to tell my people the good news."

Then the King laughed and said: "Boniface, this acorn of yours will be a tree before to-morrow morning!"

* * * * *

When Sturmi was twenty-five years old Boniface made him a priest. Now there was a certain town at this time on the great river, the Rhine. Boniface lived in this town. He was Bishop there, as Cornelius had been in Rome.

Sturmi walked beside the river. A thought came into his mind. He went to Boniface, the Bishop, and he said : "Let me go over into the forest." Among those with the Bishop one said : "No man dare live in the forest, so dangerous and dreadful it is." Another said : "Why do you want to go ?" Bishop Boniface said : "Go, and you, and you, go with him. Go into the Forest of Beeches, and find a place where monks, servants of God, may go to dwell." For in all the whole forest there was not a place where any Christian man lived at all.

So Sturmi and his companions were rowed across the yellow river. They jumped on to the muddy bank and set forth into the forest. All the first day they walked and saw no man, nor anything but the great trees, and the squirrels chattering on the boughs. And at sunset the first companion said to Sturmi : "Now Bishop Boniface is warming himself by the hall fire." Sturmi said : "Would you like to be with him ?" The first companion said : "Truly, I would rather be there than here !"

All the second day they walked and saw nothing but the great trees and the blue sky. At nightfall the second companion said : "Let us sing our evening song, as Bishop Boniface is doing now." Sturmi said : "Would you rather be there than here ?" The second companion

said : "That is a better place than this, yet I am quite content to be here."

On the third day they climbed between the trees up a steep hill, and they saw the sky in front and no more trees. They came out into the sun. There was a smooth and sunny green field, with the forest all round. A river ran by. Three stags were feeding in the field. The stags lifted up their heads and sniffed, and then started off and bounded away. So the three monks called the field 'the Harts' Field.'

Then they dragged big boughs from the beeches, and planted the thick ends in a circle in the earth. Each monk twined and interlaced the twigs together. So they made a hut, and crept into it, and slept there that night. Sturmi made a great cross and put it in the front. But they had nothing to eat except beech-nuts and whortle-berries and the last crust of their bread. The first companion said : "Now I fear the bad fairies very greatly." The second companion said : "I fear the Saxons far more than any fairy."

In the morning the sun shone brightly. But the grass was all covered with green circles, which we call fairy rings. The first companion said to Sturmi : "Look, brother, how the fairies have danced round us in the night. Who knows what fairies and elves, or perhaps even giants, have walked round our hut!" "Nay, brother,"

said Sturmi, "look how our cross stands up so firm and fast. Throw away your fear. Go down rather to the river and see what fish you can catch!"

They found springs of fresh water, and good pasture suitable for cows, and fish in the stream. The second companion said to the first: "If we had many men, and if we had a herd of good cows, we could live here and serve God well!"

One day Sturmi said: "Brethren, we have come far, and we have found a very pleasant place, but I do not think this is the place God wishes us to seek for." One said: "Why?" The other said: "What do you wish us to do?" Sturmi said: "I do not think this is the place. As for what we must do, it is this: One must go to Boniface and tell him what we have found, and ask him to tell us whether to stay here, and build a house for God, or whether to look farther. But which of us goes and which of us stays, I leave to you."

The first companion said: "I will go or stay, but not alone." The second companion said: "You, O Sturmi, go to Bishop Boniface." Sturmi was very glad. So they gave him some fish and some rabbit-meat, which was all that they had, and he set off to go to Bishop Boniface.

He told Boniface all about the Harts' Field. But he said nothing about its not being the

right place. Then Boniface said : "The Harts' Field is a good place, but I do not think it is the right place. It is a dangerous place, because the Saxons are as yet fierce and cruel and heathen, and they can easily attack you at the Harts' Field. You must go deeper into the forest and look for the right place."

The two companions sought their food by day and slept safely in the hut at night. And they made a boat, by fashioning a shape from willow boughs and fastening beech twigs over it.

After many days they saw Sturmi come out of the forest. They hurried to him, and said : "What did Bishop Boniface say ?" Sturmi said : "Father Boniface says he does not want us to stay here, because of the Saxons. He says we have not found the right place yet, and we must look farther for it."

The companions said : "We have been up the river and down the river. Its banks are covered even down to the very edge with thick bushes. But there is one place which might be the right one." So they took Sturmi in the boat and paddled up the stream. Presently the stream began to turn the head of the boat always to the shore. Sturmi said : "What ails the boat ? Or why does the stream flow so strongly ? Does it wish us to land here ?" Looking ahead, he saw that a brook came jumping down the hill-side and fell into the stream with a splash.

"O brother brook," said he, "you have a loud voice to-day, and so we will call this place 'Roughbrook,' after you." And it is called 'Roughbrook' to this day. Beside the brook was a green meadow, and there they landed. And all night long they heard the voice of the brook.

In the morning they could find no fish, nor anything else to eat. Then the two companions said: "Let us go back now to Boniface, for here now for the second time have we failed to find the right place." Sturmi agreed. For he had already a bold thought in his mind.

So all three went back to ask Bishop Boniface. Very glad was the first companion when he saw the warm lights shining in the Bishop's hall. "This," he said, "is better than the cold wind whistling through the branches."

Boniface took each by the hand, and gave each one a plateful of broiled kid, and beans, and bread, and a large cup of red wine. "Rest," he said, "after your perils."

After supper all men sat by the fire and told their tales. When no one was looking at him Sturmi crept out to Bishop Boniface, and said: "O my father Boniface, let me go alone to look for the right place. I am convinced that I shall find it." Boniface said: "My son, if thou must go, it may be thou wilt find it. To-morrow, at dawn, take my donkey out of the stable, and

take some small loaves and some flesh meat and go at once."

So he did. The donkey pattered along on its little feet. Sometimes it stopped to nibble the grass. Then Sturmi took it by the bridle and led it, for it had plenty to eat at the morning and the evening feeding-times. Each night when the sun began to set Sturmi stopped. He took his axe from the pack and cut great boughs of trees. He stuck them into the earth in a circle, and drove the donkey inside it. Then he put the last bough into the gap. Then he lit a great fire inside. So he kept himself and the donkey safe from wild beasts.

Each morning all the birds and all the brooks that ran downhill seemed to say: "Now you are nearer the place by a day's journey." But never any day did he find it.

One evening, just as the sun was going down, Sturmi called to his ass, and stopped and took his axe. As he did so he heard the sound of an axe, chop, chop, chop. Then Sturmi was frightened. He said: "Shall I get up a tree? Let me first see what it is I am afraid of." Then with the handle of his axe he tapped on a tree-trunk, as woodcutters do. "Rap, rap; tap, rap, tap."

Then there was a silence. Then he heard: "Rap, rap; tap, tap. Rap, rap; tap, tap." So he waited. Presently he heard a horse's hoofs.

There came a man leading a horse out of the wood.

Sturmi said : "Was it you, brother, who rapped with your axe ?" The man said : "Yes. Who are you, and where do you come from ? For I see you are not one of us Saxons." Sturmi said : "A Saxon am I, nevertheless, brother ; so tie up your horse by my ass, and let us make our palisade together, and spend the night together." "Agreed," said the Saxon, and so they did.

When they were sitting by the fire, Sturmi told the man all his story, and that he was looking for a place where the servants of God could live. "Now," said the Saxon, "there is a place which is just like the place you speak of. In the morning I will take you to a guide who will lead you to it." So they both went to sleep, very safe in the palisade.

Next morning Sturmi said : "Show me the guide, and I will give him this warm cloak of mine." The man laughed, and said : "He is so quick-footed you will scarcely keep up with him. Lead your ass this way." He took him up a rough path to the very top of the hill. On the other side a little stream flowed out and ran down. "There he is," said the man. "Follow him, and you will know the place when you see it. And don't forget to give him the cloak." So he went away laughing.

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Sturmi followed the stream right down into the valley. There he found a wide meadow. To the right and the left rose hills. The meadow was covered with long grass. Pansies and blue bachelor's buttons grew in it.

Sturmi knew that this was the right place.

Sure enough, Boniface and Sturmi built houses there for many monks, and a church, in the meadow. They called the place 'Fulda.' Sturmi lived there always. He made friends with many Saxons. Some Saxons became Christians. But most of them remained heathens. At last some of them, far to the north, killed Boniface. Men brought his body to Sturmi, who buried it in his church in the meadow.

Thus even Sturmi and Boniface did not make the Saxons peaceful.

XII

CHARLES THE GREAT

STURMI ruled all the monks at Fulda for years and years, until his beard was as white as snow, and his head as bald as an egg. He did many good works among the Saxons; but do what he would, and say what he would, only one here and one there became Christian.

One day messengers came to him as he sat in his hall at Fulda. They said: "The King of the Franks is dead, O Father Sturmi. His son Charles reigns in his stead, and he commands you to come to him." "Willingly," said Sturmi. "But what does he want?" "That we do not know," said the messengers. "Where is he to be found?" asked Father Sturmi. "Guide us to the great river," said the messengers, "then we will row down with the stream. When we come to land, we will take you to our Lord Charles."

So they did, and all the way, as they walked or as they rode, Sturmi wondered what Charles wanted.

At last they came to a leafy valley, and sure enough they saw the roof of a great palace, and

a round church beside it. The messengers led Sturmi to Charles—whom, to-day, we more often know as ‘Charlemagne.’ Charles was a tall man, and big in the bones; his hair was short and curly ; his eyes were blue. Very pleasant-mannered was he, wise in council, unconquered in fight, loved by all men. But when he was angry his eyes blazed and his voice was like thunder. Then no man dared to face him unless his cause was good.

Charles said : “Father Sturmi, in the time of holy Boniface my father fought for ten years against the Saxons. And the holy Boniface preached to them for as long. And neither had peace with the Saxons. And now again the Saxons have come over my border. They kill and burn villages inside my border. So my warriors have fought against them. But they have not stopped them. How have you fared with them ?”

Sturmi said : “Lord Charles, the first time that ever I saw your father he said to blessed Boniface, ‘How many Saxons have you made Christian ?’ and Boniface answered, ‘Here one and there one.’ So too I say also : Here one and there one, and that is all.”

All the warriors standing by said : “Call out all your men, Lord King, and let us fight as hard as we can, and in a year and a day we will conquer these Saxons for ever.”

Sturmi said : " Not a year, nor ten, but thirty will you need. You will never hold them fast until you teach them about the true God." Then all the warriors said that Sturmi spoke like a monk. " O warriors," said Sturmi, " I give you one counsel : before anything else in the Saxon land, destroy the Irminsul."

" What is that ? " said Charles. Sturmi replied : " In the depths of the forest in the Saxon land stands a sacred grove. For the Saxons think their gods are too great to go into little temples. So they make trees and groves and springs sacred to their gods.

" In this grove stands the Irminsul. Of what shape or form it is I do not know. But this I know, that they call it the sustainer of all things, and say it holds up the world. They believe that Thor the Red-bearded and Odin All-father come there when they visit the homes of men. Moreover, to that place they sometimes take prisoners captured in war. Dark and dreadful things they do there secretly. No prisoner has ever come back from the Irminsul."

Then Charles lifted up his right hand, and said : " By the King of Heaven, we will see the Irminsul, and make that place sacred to the true God."

Charles called together all the warriors of the Franks. He led them across the great river,

they and their horses and the two-wheeled ox-carts. Beyond lay the great forest, and the hills, one behind the other, like the waves of the sea. A river ran down into the great river, out of a green valley. The track up this valley was very muddy. It was nearly overgrown with grass and ferns and meadow-sweet. The scouts rode through the grass, and their horses ate mouthfuls as they went along.

Then they came into the Forest of Beeches, still following the little river. They marched under the big branches. One Frank said to another: "Who knows what bad spirits there are in these woods? The Saxons say their gods live in the trees." "Yes, indeed," said the other, "so I have heard men say, and in the water springs too. It would be dreadful if we could find no water. Who knows what may happen to us here?"

Now Charles said to his captains: "Send out your men through the woods. Wherever they find a Saxon homestead, let it be burned."

Sure enough, soon smoke could be seen rising here and there in the wood.

At last the scouts galloped back, and said: "Lord Charles, there ahead in the wood is the Stronghold of the Saxons."

They led Charles to a clear space among the trees. On the opposite side of the valley, on a

low hill, stood the Stronghold. It was a great enclosure, with walls built of great tree-trunks. It had a gate made of stout beams of wood. All the Saxon warriors were there in it.

Then Charles led his men down the hill, and up the other side. Hard and dreadful was the battle that day. For first a great band of Saxons rushed out of the wood upon the Franks. Never did any men fight more bravely than the Saxons. Very nearly they thrust the Franks down the hill. Charles urged his great grey horse uphill, and hewed upon the Saxons with his iron sword. Even the bravest Saxons feared him like death.

Then the Franks won their way into the open space before the Stronghold, the Saxons being dispersed into the wood. The Frankish horsemen rode up to the wall, and hurled their darts into the Stronghold. The Saxons shot their arrows as thick as a cloud of midges in summer. Many Franks fell from their saddles, stung by the arrows; and they gained no ground.

Then Charles called them all back, and said to the leaders of the cavalry: "Let all your men take all their darts and spears, and attack so strongly at one side that they cannot guard the gate." To the foot soldiers he said: "Take your flint stones, and knock them together, and get fire, and find dry branches from the forest for torches. Hold your shields above your

heads, and run, and try to set fire to the walls or the gate."

So they did, but of all only one party reached the wall. But the wood being dry, and the wind blowing, the flame soon rose to a mighty sheet, and blew in on the Saxons. So the Stronghold was taken, and the Saxons scattered in the woods. Charles called his sword 'the Joyous One,' because it had drunk so much Saxon blood. But a certain priest said: "I fear that he whose sword drinks the blood of men will soon want drink of any other sort."

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In the depths of the forest, in a grove of trees, stood the Irminsul, the sustainer of all things. The Irminsul was the bare trunk of a huge tree. So weather-beaten and ancient it was that at times it appeared as if a face could be seen dimly in its bark. Beneath it was a place where the earth was discoloured with fire, as though things had often been burnt there.

Charles rode forward, and was the first to go into the grove. He gave orders: "Hew down the idol, and burn it up." First, his priest took some water, and blessed it, and sprinkled the ground all round the Irminsul. Then he sprinkled the Irminsul itself. Then the Franks took their axes, and cut down the Irminsul. Some hewing, and some pulling, crash! at last

it fell to the earth. "See," said one Frank to another, "now at last the idol is fallen, and we are safe from the bad spirits." "May it be as you say," said the other. Then they all brought torches, and burnt the Irminsul to ashes.

Charles said : "Pitch the tents here. We will rest here three days." He knew that they must stay there, to wait for fresh men. It was hot and sunny. On the second day at midday some Franks took their horses to the brook to drink. Lo and behold ! the brook had hardly any water at all. When they ran to the springs, all the springs had dried up. That night they drank very sparingly, and went to sleep thirsty, man and beast.

Next day, when they went down all thirsty to the brook, it was totally dry. The stones at the bottom were hot already with the sun. Now Charles came down to the brook, among the murmuring Franks. He perceived that some thought that the gods of the Saxons had done this, remembering about the gods of the water springs. He said : "I shall stay here until the third day, and, captains, tell your men that he who talks least will be the least thirsty." Then he went to his tent, and did all his work. The men did theirs. When the midday rest came some murmured, some sucked pebbles, others chewed grass, for they were greatly tormented with thirst.

It happened that one soldier thought he would

go into the wood to see if he could find any water or dew among the plants, being afraid neither of the gods of the trees nor of the gods of the water springs. He looked everywhere, but found none. Then he walked up the stony bed of a little stream to see if any water remained under the stones. But never any did he find. He sat down on the bank, quite despairing. Suddenly he saw in the bed of the stream a little spurt of water come gushing forth, and then die down, leaving a little pool. He put in his hands to scoop up some water, and lo and behold ! a second great spurt of water came, and wetted him right up to his elbows ; then it died down and left a greater pool. Then he drank all he wanted, in great astonishment. Suddenly there came a third spurt, larger than either of the others, and left a large pool, which began to trickle down. And when he saw another spurt come, and the trickle begin to run quickly, he started back to the camp to tell his companions. But the little stream reached the camp before he did !

This spring can be seen to-day. People now call it the Bullerborn.

All that year Charles fought against the Saxons. In the autumn Charles said : "Build up the Stronghold again, and make it strong enough to withstand the whole people of the Saxons." He left Franks in it, to guard it.

Then he and all his men went back to the land of the Franks.

When the spring came, and the first green shoots appeared, Charles asked his servants : "What news is there about the Saxons ?" They said : "The Saxons are all fighting, even against your men in the Stronghold." Then Charles called all the Franks to the army. They left the plough in the field, they left the fishing-boat on the stream, they left the iron on the anvil. They took their horses, their swords, and their spears, and came to Charles.

He led them the same way that they had gone before. Above the Stronghold hung a great smoke. When they came there all that was left was the half-burnt beams that lay upon the ground. Of the Frankish garrison none was found alive.

The Franks were sad and sorrowful when they saw this. But Charles said : "Build it up again, stronger than ever." Then all that summer his men ravaged the Saxon land. When the autumn came he chose his bravest men to guard the Stronghold. All the Franks wondered whom he would choose to be their chief. Some named one man, some another.

But Charles sent for his swiftest messengers, and said to them : "Go back to the great river, and go up it, against the stream, until you see hills upon your left hand. Climb up them, and

follow a little stream downhill ; and then you will see a meadow, and a house and church in it, and monks serving God, and sitting in the midst of them a monk, old and wise. Bid him come to me, for I will have him as chief of the Stronghold." For Charles had not forgotten Sturmi.

So Sturmi came, and said to Charles : "This is a hard task, to guard this against the Saxons. I am old, and soon I shall die. But I will do it, if I can."

No man knew the ways of the Saxons like Sturmi. No one was as wise and wary as he was. As long as he lived the Saxons could not take the Stronghold.

One day in winter a messenger came to Charles in his palace. He said : "Father Sturmi bade me say that the Stronghold is safe and sound. But alas for us, our father Sturmi is dead, and that is his last message." Charles was very sad, for he loved Sturmi. Also, he feared for the Stronghold.

In the spring, when Charles and the Franks came along the road to the Stronghold, no smoke hung over it ; no man was to be seen, nothing was to be heard. But black beams lying on the ground were all that were left of the Stronghold, for the second time. Then Charles said : "If Sturmi had lived this had not happened."

Meantime, in the depths of the forest, a chief of the Saxons looked out from his house. Every year a stork came to build its nest upon his house. He saw the stork flying from the south. He said: "Here comes the luck of our folk." For he thought it brought good luck with it. But after two days the stork flew away toward the land of the Franks. Then all the chiefs were troubled.

In the land of the Saxons called Westfali all the birds left the sacred groves. So the priests sought for a sign from the gods. The priest cut a branch from a fruit tree, and cut off little rounds from it. Upon each round he marked a sign, some good, some bad. Then he scattered them all upon a white garment laid upon the ground. Looking up to the sky, and praying, he picked up one round without looking. This he did nine times. Lo and behold! upon three the signs were good, and upon six the signs were bad.

Then all the Saxons were very much frightened, and submitted to Charles. But one chief, Witikind, said: "Rather will I die than submit to the Franks." Witikind was taller than most men, and stronger. He was very wise in speech and counsel. Also he was kind and pleasant, and very merry, so that many men loved him. He fought still against Charles, and some men followed him, but daily fewer. When he saw

this, he said : "Time it is for me to leave this land." So he went away to the north, far beyond the land of the Saxons, farther and farther, to the land of giants and robbers, to the people who are called Northmen.

Now from the first year ten years had been spent. People far and wide heard of Charles. Men far south and men far west praised him, and kept peace with him. Even in Rome itself men said : "In the old days the Roman Emperor was not much greater than this Charles."



Far to the north, Witikind lifted up his head and looked south.

Then he and his men went south, and came at last to his old home, in the land of the Saxons. "Hey," said Witikind, "what new house is that standing there so trim, with the cross on it?" The Saxons said : "That is the house King Charles has ordered us to make for his god." "A small god he must be, to have so small a house," said Witikind. "What do you do there?" "We do not do anything, but there is an old man here who sings songs in it, and he is as it were our lord. We have to give him a tenth part of everything we possess—our tenth ox, our tenth lamb, yes, even down to the tenth apple and the tenth nut." "Men," said Witikind, "do you bear this?"

Then throughout the Saxon land the Saxon men rose against Charles. They met the army of the Franks. Charles was far away. They defeated the Franks. Never was there such slaughter of the Franks by the Saxons. Many and noble were the Franks who lay dead at the end of that day.

When Charles heard of it he said: "There can be but one end to this. Now I will punish them so that they shall never forget it." And he remembered what Sturmi had said about thirty years.

Right soon he was in the land of the Saxons. Witikind fled far away to the northward, to the Northmen. Charles said to the Saxons: "Give me Witikind." He meant to kill him. But they could not. Then he said: "Give me all who fought in that battle." Then on a wide heath the Saxons brought many of their own men tied with cords and gave them up. Charles sat there on his grey horse. The prisoners looked at him. That was the last sight which they saw, for he said: "Let not one be alive by sunset."

People say the earth is still red in that place.

Then for many years the Franks ravaged the Saxon land. In spring not a field was sown with seed, nor were there any calves in the pastures. In autumn there was no harvest for the Saxons. In the winter no house stood up

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to give shelter. So the Saxons could not resist Charles. Even far to the northward the warriors of the Saxons at last submitted to Charles.

Charles asked all his prisoners : "Where is Witikind ?" They always said : "Gone to the northward." But at last one said : "Two days from here you will find his homestead, in the land which belongs to the King of the Northmen. You can capture him there, and kill him, and I shall rejoice, for he is my enemy."

Charles said : "Find out the noblest among the Saxon prisoners." They were brought before him. He ordered them : "Ride forward, and take this man as your guide. Go to Witikind, and say Charles wishes you to come to him ; and he says that you shall come in safety, and be in safety, and depart in safety, both you and those that are with you. This he promises upon his word as a Christian."

After some days the Saxon messengers came back. They said : "This is Witikind's answer. First, he thanks the King for his message. Secondly, he says : 'What is a promise ? A word which flies away out of the mouth into the air, and is gone.' So he will not trust those who are with him to the promise. But if the King will send ten of his warriors, good and valuable men, to him, to remain in his home-stead. among his warriors, then he will come to

the King; and the lives of those men shall answer for the lives of Witikind and his men."

Charles heard this with attention. He answered: "Witikind speaks like a brave and cautious man, but not like a Christian." Then he called ten of his bravest men and sent them to Witikind.

In the winter Witikind came to Charles's palace, in the land of the Franks. He came into the hall, and greeted Charles as a king should be greeted, and Charles received him with honour. Very soon Charles and Witikind liked one another well. Charles said: "One thing only I wish, and that is that you were a Christian." Witikind answered: "I do not wish to leave my gods, who were the gods of my fathers."

One day, as usual, a minstrel sang to Charles during dinner. It happened that he sang a song of the Irminsul, of Thor and of Odin, of the gods of the trees and of the springs, of the priest, and of the sprinkling of the Irminsul with holy water, of the fall of the Irminsul, of the drying up of the brook, and of the spring that spurted up.

He sang this song in the Frankish tongue. But Witikind understood it. Afterward he went privately to the minstrel and asked if it were a true song. The minstrel said it was, for he himself had seen all that was related in it.

Witikind was troubled in mind, and thought : " If Thor and Odin were stronger than the Christian God, they would have revenged this deed." Charles saw that Witikind was ill at ease ; but next morning Witikind was cheerful even beyond his wont. He said to Charles : " Send me your priest, and let him make me a Christian." Charles was greatly pleased. He asked Witikind what had persuaded him. Witikind answered : " Last night, in my sleep, it seemed to me that a big man with a red beard, grim to look on, came to me, and with him a man with one eye ; they looked at me in an unfriendly way, and said : ' Hey, Witikind, what bad trick are you thinking of playing on us ? Your father and forefathers were good and true to us ; are you going to desert us, like a cowardly warrior fleeing from the chief ? ' Then I knew that one was Thor and the other Odin. And I answered : ' I worshipped you as long as I did not know the truth, but now I have proved you full of falsehood ; therefore it is right for me to flee to the God who is much better than you.' Then they left me in great enmity. When I woke, and considered what I had said to them, I thought that it was good and reasonable. So I made up my mind."

Then, to the great joy of all the people, Witikind was made a Christian.

Witikind was faithful to Charles all his life long. But the Saxons fought against Charles again. At last he conquered them finally. It was the thirty-third year since the fall of the Irminsul.

CHAPTER XIII

CHARLES AND ALCUIN

CHARLES and Hildegard his wife had six children — three boys, Charles, Pepin, Louis, and three girls, Ruodruda, Bertha, and Gisela. Charles was the eldest, and Pepin the next.

The custom of the Franks was that the men taught the boys to ride and to fight and to know the laws and customs, while the women taught the girls to spin and to weave wool and to do all housework. So Charles's little sons learnt to ride and to fight, and his little daughters to spin and to weave.

Charles was away fighting all the summer, but he was mostly at home in the winter. Often in summer, when he was in his camp, he looked at the sky at night. He watched the moon and the stars. Some were always to be found in the same places. Others were sometimes higher up, sometimes lower down in the sky, night by night. Charles wondered how the moon and the stars could change so. But no one could tell him. He saw, however, that most things that people knew they learnt out of books.

Charles learnt to read. Soon he read very easily.

One day, as Charles was going through one of his towns, he saw a great crowd in the market-place, shouting and laughing. He sent two men to find out what the matter was. The first came back quickly and said : "Some men have arrived, like merchants from England. They have not much to sell. I think the people are laughing at them." But the second man came back and said : "There are two monks from Ireland, come with the merchants. They give such funny answers that all the people are laughing. For one shouted out, just like a merchant with his goods : 'Any one who wants wisdom, come to us, for we have it for sale.' So all the people came to see this wisdom (for they did not know what it was), and they looked for it on the ground, but the monks had no bags or boxes, and the wisdom was nowhere to be seen ! So now all the people are laughing." Then Charles said : "Bring the men to the palace as fast as possible."

When the monks were brought before him Charles said : "Is it true that you have wisdom, as our people are saying ?" The elder of them answered : "We have ; and, what is more, we will give it to those who want it." "At what price do you sell it ?" said Charles. "This is our price : a proper place to teach in, good

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pupils, a little food, and a little clothing." Then Charles was much pleased. He ordered that the first, and the last two of these things should be given them at once. As to the second, he himself picked out boys to be taught.

Once Charles was in his palace. Among the strangers and guests was a monk, who, it was said, had come all the way from England. People said also : "This is the monk, Alcuin by name, who knows more than any other man of our time."

Now Alcuin lived among the monks at York. Many boys came to the monastery to be taught ; Alcuin had the teaching of them. He had more books gathered together there than there were in any place in England. Out of these books he taught the boys.

Charles said to him : "Will you come and teach me and my grown-up councillors, and also my little children ?" Alcuin said : "No." But Charles begged and entreated him, until at last he consented.

In winter Charles was at his palace. One day a present was brought to him by a messenger. The present was a jewel. It was sent from a wise and holy monk, who had many monks under him. This monk sent a letter with the jewel, to say whom it was from.

Charles gave the letter to one of his servants to read to him. As the servant read he kept stopping, and also making mistakes. "What is

the matter?" said Charles. "Can you not read it?" The servant answered: "I can read it easily, but the light is bad." At that moment Alcuin came in. "Give the letter to Alcuin to read," said Charles. Alcuin took the letter and read. He stopped, however, once, and even twice. "What is the matter?" said Charles. "Can you not read it?" "No," said Alcuin, "I cannot." "How is that?" said Charles. "This servant of mine could read it well, if only the light had been better, and you are thought to be more used to books and writing than he." "Lord," said Alcuin, "the truth is that whoever wrote this letter writes so badly and spells so badly that it is harder to read than Greek." Then Charles laughed, and said to his servant: "If you had said honestly that it was difficult it would have been to your credit. But now I fear that you did not know that the mistakes were mistakes."

Then Charles turned to Alcuin and said: "My scholar, I have often noticed that in the letters which my monks write to me the ideas are good, but the language and the writing are very bad. Can this be amended?"

Alcuin said: "Look at this letter. Here is the name of the monk written—'Benedictus.' See, O King, how the letters are shaped—or, rather, not shaped, being all deformed. Now in England, in my home at York, we shaped our

letters differently, and each letter had its proper shape—thus.” And he wrote ‘Benedictus.’ “And so it must be,” he said, “if any man is to read it at all. These are the old patterns of the letters, as I learnt them from the wise Irishmen, countrymen of St Columba.”

Charles said : “These patterns of letters shall be used in my kingdom, if I have any power at all.”

“Also, Lord Charles,” said Alcuin, “look again at this letter. Here Benedict meant to say, ‘I send you a present, for I have great cause to be thankful to you.’ But what he has written instead of ‘great cause’ is ‘grate caws’ ! Here, again, he says he writes in his ‘cave,’ because his monks live in caves in the rock. But he puts ‘t’ instead of ‘c,’ and that spells ‘tave,’ which is nonsense ! In another place, instead of ‘cavern’ he puts ‘b’ for ‘v,’ and ‘in’ for ‘ern,’ and writes ‘cabin’ as if he were in a ship at sea.”

Now all this grieved Charles very much. “How can this be put right ?” Alcuin said : “First, they must have good letters to copy. In England, and in Ireland, the monks write a beautiful hand, both capitals and small letters. I will send to my friends for patterns. Also, where the Romans have left letters, cut upon stones, those letters are good.”



Now Charles had a thought. His youngest son was a little new-born baby. He wanted to give his wife and his little son a present. So he said : "Let a copy of the Gospels be written, in every way the best that can be made. Who shall write it?" Alcuin said : "Let Godescalc write it."

Every year Charles asked : "Is it done?" At the end of the seventh year, Godescalc said : "It is done." Then he showed it to the King. Charles opened it.

On the first page Godescalc had drawn a temple, surrounded with pillars. Inside the temple hung a lamp; underneath it the water from a fountain rose into the air. All round the temple grew trees with green leaves and red flowers like roses. Among the leaves and flowers Godescalc had painted animals and birds — peacocks and pheasants and cocks and partridges, with feathers of red and brown and gold. These birds were pecking at the flowers.

Charles turned over the page. There was a picture of Saint Matthew, one on the next of Saint Mark, and of Saint Luke, and of Saint John, and, last, of Jesus Himself.

Then he turned over again. Godescalc had coloured each page purple all over, and had written in letters of gold. Each letter was exactly shaped. Round the writing on every page was a border; sometimes it had patterns

in white, sometimes in gold, sometimes in blue, red, and yellow. Now this book has been preserved to this present day. It can be seen in Paris.

When Alcuin came to live with Charles, Charles had said : " You must teach my little children, as well as my grown-up councillors and myself. For as for me, I can read, but I cannot write at all." So Alcuin began to teach them all. He taught the little boys in the day-time. Often Charles was so busy that he could only have his lessons at night. But he liked this for one thing—he could watch the stars with Alcuin, and learn from him the reasons for their movements.

Alcuin taught the boys to read and to write and to spell. He saw what they had written, and showed them their spelling mistakes. To one he said : " You must spell 'holidays' h-o-l-i-d-a-y-s, not h-o-l-l-y-d-a-y-s." To another he said : " In your composition you have put, 'He rode upon a whitened horse.' What does 'whitened' mean ? How is it different from 'white' ? You must not use words if you do not understand them." To another he said : " What is the difference between 'bear' and 'bare' ? "

Then one boy questioned another about the letters. "Pepin," he said, "what is a letter?" Pepin said : "The least part of a sound. But,

my master, is there any other way of explaining what a letter is?" Alcuin said: "Yes, there is, but it means the same. A letter cannot be divided. We divide sentences into words, words into syllables, syllables into letters, but we can't divide a letter."

Louis said: "Now give the different kinds of letters." Charles said: "Vowels and consonants." "Well," said Louis, "explain the difference." "The vowels can be said by themselves, but the consonants cannot." Well, so they went on. In the reading they came to the word 'marvel.' "What is a marvel?" asked Pepin. Alcuin said: "Lately I saw a man standing, who was not a man." Pepin said: "But how could that be?" Alcuin laughed, and said: "It was my reflection in a pool of water!" Pepin said: "Why ever did I not think of that, when I have seen that very man so often myself?" Alcuin said: "I'll tell you another marvel, if you can guess it." Pepin said: "But if I guess wrong, then you must tell it." "Very well," said Alcuin, "I will. A certain man, whom I don't know, talked to me, without a voice, and he never was and he never will be!" "O master," said Pepin, "was it a man in a dream?" "Right, my son," said Alcuin.

Soon the boys could read, write, and spell well. Charles said to Alcuin: "They learn well. But as for me, in spite of all you teach

me, I cannot shape my letters at all." Charles's fingers were very strong. He held the reins of his great horse, and turned it any way, and he clasped his great sword and he swung and turned it. But his fingers were thick and stiff. He could not make the little pen write its little stroke.

He kept a pen and tablets under his pillow. Three or four times in the night he used to wake up and practise writing. But to the day of his death King Charles could never write.

XIV

INGIALD

ACROSS the sea from England, to the north, lies the land of the Northmen. Part is called Swithiod, or Sweden. Long ago the Northmen dwelt only in Swithiod. Swithiod is a great forest land. There are such great uninhabited forests that it is a journey of many days to cross them. Only here and there did the Northmen find a clear place. There they built a farmhouse, and ploughed the land.

Long ago Odin ruled in Swithiod. So said the Northmen. He was the wisest of all the gods. After his days the kingship passed from father to son seventeen times, and came to King Onund.

King Onund was a cheerful, strong, and good-looking man. His wife bore him a little son. At once the old nurse took the little baby, and went into the hall. King Onund was sitting upon his high seat. He had on a scarlet tunic, and over it a grey cloak, lined with squirrel's fur, and fastened with a clasp of gold. The nurse laid the little baby down upon the floor before the King's high seat. The baby

stretched out its little legs, and moved its tiny hands. It seemed to Onund so pretty and so strong, and he was so glad that it was a boy, that he picked it up, and laid it in a fold of his cloak. All the men in the hall saw this, and knew that the King had taken up his little son. Had it been otherwise, the little baby would have been taken into the forest and allowed to perish.

Now King Onund was greatly pleased about the baby. He sent for the bravest of his kinsmen, who took the child and sprinkled him with water. The King asked him what his name should be. He sang :

“ Ingald shall the boy be called.
He shall fight battles,
Be brave like his father,
Be called the most mighty
Of all Odin’s sons.”

Every one was pleased with this, for Ingald had been the name of a great hero, and they thought it would bring luck.

Then the kinsman took off a gold ring and said to the baby : “ This ring will I give you, Ingald, as a name-fastening present.” Onund said : “ To-day upon my farms young horses and young dogs have been born. To-day in my smithies my smiths have fashioned swords, and spears, and shirts made of iron rings. All these things will I give to you, Ingald, because

both you and they began life upon the same day." So the whole house was full of pleasure because of the little baby.

Now King Onund sent to Svipdag the Blind to come to him. When Svipdag had arrived, and had taken off his travelling cloak, he came into the hall. King Onund received him with all the honour possible. He led him to a chair, right opposite the King's high seat. The fire was in the middle, burning between them. Then the nurse came in quietly, and laid the baby upon the knees of Svipdag. He felt the bundle there, and said as quick as thought : "Whose baby is this that is knee-seated upon my knee ?" King Onund answered across the fire : "Do not be afraid, Svipdag ; it is not any mean man that asks you to bring up his child as if it were your own. The child is my son." Svipdag said : "In any case, the child has been set upon my knee, and is now my knee-seated child. I will be his foster-father in word and deed, and will do all that is possible to make him the best of warriors." Every one said that if Svipdag did this nothing could bring him more honour. Then Svipdag felt the child with his hands. He felt how stout and strong his little legs and arms were, and how he moved himself about vigorously. This pleased him, and he said all manner of good of the boy.

So Svipdag took Ingiald away. Onund always wanted to hear news of him. But he did not go to see him until he was nine months old. Then he found him grown big, and beginning to walk. He had already one tooth. All this pleased the King. He gave Ingiald an ivory comb as a tooth-fee. To Svipdag he said : "Your foster-child promises well. Wisely and well are you doing, just as I thought you would."

For six years Ingiald lived with Svipdag. The winter of the sixth year came. All the trees in the forest were bowed down under the masses of snow. Always more and more snow fell, until midwinter. Then Svipdag made a great feast, because it was midwinter.¹ He invited the kings from all the lands round. When they had all come Svipdag prepared to offer the midwinter sacrifices, upon the third day. Meantime he entertained the kings and all their men with snow-shoe races, and football upon the ice, and wrestling. Many other games did they play.

On the third day the men took sides for a game of football upon the ice. The little boys also played together on a flat place where the snow was all trampled down. Each boy took his striker ; and then they took sides. They chose Alf, son of the King of Fiadrundaland, to be

¹ January 12.

leader of one side. He was about six years old, like Ingiald. They chose Ingiald to be leader on the other side, for he was tall and strong and ruddy. Then Alf kicked the ball into the middle. Ingiald played against Alf, and the others one against one, according to their age. Ingiald's side were all very keen, but Ingiald himself did not run his fastest. The game went on for a long time. The men had done their game, and came and stood and watched the boys. Now Alf ran his hardest, and played hard for his side, but he was rather rough-handed. Then he scored over Ingiald, and all the men clapped their hands. Alf scored over Ingiald two times out of three. Now Ingiald burst out crying and cried bitterly. The men laughed, and said : "Is this that Ingiald about whom so many good things were said ? Alf is the better man of the two."

Now Svipdag's grown-up son had been playing football with the other men. He came up. He heard all the men laughing and Ingiald crying and saw all the game stopped. He went straight to Ingiald, seized hold of his hand, and went back with him to the house. Ingiald's tears ran down his face. The foster-brother led him into the hall and they came before Svipdag, where he sat on his high seat with the fire burning before him. Svipdag said : "Who is this that I hear crying ?" His son said : "Alas !

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it is Ingiald. He has shown himself much weaker and less manly than Alf in the game. He has cried before everybody, and worse, he did not play his hardest. We who have brought him up have great cause to be ashamed of him and of ourselves." "Truly," answered Svipdag, "for me, this is a great shame indeed, but none to you. For it is I who took him on my knee, and it is I who promised the King that he should grow up brave and quick. Therefore, if I can in any way make good my word, it behoves me to do it quickly, before he gets any worse and weaker."

Then Svipdag told them to go away, and he sat there alone to consider. Now, after thinking, he thought of an old and very wicked counsel. So at least the story says. For after long hours, no one daring to go into the hall, the voice of Svipdag was heard, calling for his son. So his son went in, and Svipdag said: "Take your sword and hunting-spear, and your dogs, go into the forest, and do not come back until you have killed a great grey wolf, six years old at least, and a leader of the pack, and bring the wolf's body back to me."

Next day, in the evening, the son came back. His dogs limped along. He carried on his shoulders a great grey wolf, and the paws were fastened round his neck. He took it by its feet,

and laid it down in front of Svipdag. They two were all alone in the hall. He said : "O my father Svipdag, I have brought you a wolf. No greater one ran on four legs in the wood." Then Svipdag leant down, and felt with his hands. He felt the rough, shaggy fur, and he felt the pointed nose, and he felt the sharp teeth under the soft edge of the lip. So he knew that the wolf was strong, and young, and in his prime. Then his son said : "What shall I do now ?" Svipdag said : "Son, what animal is there as brave and quick as a wolf? If a man were as brave and as quick, would he not be a great warrior, and foremost in battle, and in the games ?" "Yes, surely," said he. Then said Svipdag : "Just such a man I would wish my little Ingiald to be, and just such a man will I make my little Ingiald." The son knew that Svipdag was a wise man, and old, and deeply skilled in wisdom and magic. So he believed Svipdag. Svipdag said: "Fetch Ingiald." While his son went for him, Svipdag took the heart of the wolf, and roasted it over the fire, and cooked it, as people cook meat in front of the fire. When Ingiald came, he took his knife, and cut a little piece off, and held it out to the boy and said : "My son, eat this morsel." And Ingiald ate it up. Then Svipdag was pleased with him, and sent him away smiling.

But from that day men said that Ingiald's whole

nature and disposition seemed to change. As he grew older, many men feared him, and no one loved him, except his foster-brother.



Every year King Onund caused many places to be cleared of trees. Right in the forests the axes of the Northmen rang, as the trees came crashing down. But some said : "The gods of the forest will surely bear a grudge against this King."

Then, year by year, the Northmen ploughed their fields in the forest, and they raised good crops always in the time of King Onund. But the King ill treated the earth also, in making roads. For his men took spades, and cut the earth, and gathered stones, and laid them upon the track, and took heavy hammers and beat them down. So they made many a good road upon the poor earth.

King Onund did even more than this. There was a valley high up in the mountains ; snow lay there long, and fell there early. Onund said that a road must be made there, so that he could pass along to his farm in the uplands. But the hill-side was so steep that it could not be. Men said : "The Earth God does not allow any road to be made on his high hills." But the King said : "There shall be a road here, and this I swear." Then he sent men there in summer with picks and spades. They cut a

good wide road right out of the hill-side itself. The road was very useful, and many people admired it. But others said : "Now certainly the Earth God will have vengeance for this."

In the autumn the King went up to his farm in the uplands. It rained, and it rained, and all the little streams ran over their banks. All the waterfalls had so much water in them that they made a noise like thunder. White rain-clouds covered the whole sky. King Onund said : "It is useless to stay here any longer. We will go down to the valley, and I will visit Svipdag, and see my son Ingiald, for he is old enough now to be King under me." So the men got ready the horses. When they started it was still raining, and white snow covered the hill-tops. They rode carefully down the path. Water was running down it, as if it were a little stream. The horses splashed and splashed. The King's men said : "It is lucky for us that the road is made down the hill-side. We should have a longer and a wetter ride else!"

In the evening a man knocked at the gate of Svipdag's homestead. He was brought into the hall. Water from his hair and water from his cloak ran down and made a great pool where he stood. He said : "King Onund, alas! is dead." Svipdag started, and asked : "By what enemy?" The man said : "By no man, Svipdag. We rode down by the new road, and I by chance in front

of all the others. It was so misty that the others at the back looked like shadows. Suddenly I heard something louder than thunder, and a cold wind blew. Lo! the whole hill-side disappeared. There came pouring down earth, mixed with stones and pine-trees. Down it poured like a river. Right across the road it went. There, under it, lie buried the King and all his men!"

When his father, King Onund, was dead, King Ingiald ordered a great feast to be prepared at his homestead. He gave it so that he might claim his father's inheritance before many great men, who could bear witness in a matter of so much importance. It was called the Inheritance Feast. To it Ingiald invited all the kings of Swithiod, the King of Gautland, and the King of Fiadrundaland, and the King of Nerike, and the King of Attundaland, and the King of Sudermannaland. He invited also Alf and his brother, the two sons of the King of Fiadrundaland. This was Alf with whom Ingiald had played as a child. Seven kings in all he invited to this feast. He said to his men: "To do honour to my guests, I will build a hall, completely new, and call it the Seven Kings' Hall." They all thought he was very hospitable. So the new hall was built. It was oblong, a long wall facing the north, and a long wall facing the south, a short wall facing the east, and a short wall

facing the west. The fires were down the middle of the room, as was usual. But what was unusual was that instead of one high seat there were eight high seats along the long wall. Each high seat was of wood, wonderfully carved, and each had a footstool attached in front.

The kings came, but when all the guests were there, it was found that the King of Sudermannaland had not come. Ingiald said nothing, but he did not forget it.

On the day appointed for the feast each of the six kings took his seat in his own high seat. His men sat in very honourable places opposite. King Ingiald then came in. He was clad in a blue tunic, and white trousers, and his belt and his sword-sheath had clasps and edges of gold. He was a fair and strong man, and his expression was very friendly. He went up to the high seat in the middle of all the seats along the wall and sat down upon the footstool. It was right for him to sit there. He had all manner of good things prepared, and feasted the kings like a royal householder. At the end of the feast one came in bearing a full bowl of wine. It was the custom that the first health to be drunk should be that of the god Bragi. Hence it was called the Bragi bowl. Further, it was the custom that when the son gave the Inheritance Feast, at the end of the feast he should stand up and make some solemn vow over the Bragi

bowl. All men were very curious to know what vow Ingiald would make. They expected something of great importance.

The bearer of the Bragi bowl went between the tables to King Ingiald, where he sat upon the footstool. Then Ingiald got up. He took from the table a large bull's horn, rimmed with gold, and tipped with gold, and with a golden rest on which it stood. He filled it full from the Bragi bowl. Then he said: "I call you, O Kings, and all you men here, to witness that I take oath, by this horn, and by the Bragi bowl, that I will enlarge my kingdom by one half, toward all the four corners of the world." Thereupon he pointed the horn to the north wall and the south wall and the east wall and the west wall. Then he put his foot upon the footstool, and took his place in his high seat, as the King. Thus Ingiald took possession of his father's inheritance before all men.

All the men shouted applause, and the old kings said one to another: "This vow is a very fair and worthy one. Onund's son will evidently enlarge his realm as Onund did." Little did they know what Ingiald was about to do.

When the feast was ended, Ingiald said: "No man of mine shall sleep in this hall, for I want my guests to have all the hall to themselves." So the men went out into the cold, and the guests stayed in the warmth of the hall.

But no sooner were his guests asleep than Ingiald sent his foster-brother to set light to the hall, and slay the kings and all those who were with them. Then Ingiald laid all the lands of the kings under his power. Thus he fulfilled his vow over the Bragi bowl. But in the end it was neither to his honour nor his profit.

King Ingiald ruled for many years, and they were all evil. He slew the King of Sudermannaland by treachery. It was a common saying about him that he had slain twelve kings and had deceived them all.

His son Olaf was very unlike him. He loved to cut down trees in the forest, and to clear new fields, and to carve fine patterns upon high seats and door-posts. So he was called ‘Olaf Wood-carver.’

One day Olaf was carving upon a piece of wood when a man came and stood in his light. The man had come running. He was panting. He said to Olaf: “Greeting to you, King Olaf.” Then Olaf knew that something had happened to his father. When the man had rested, he told Olaf how King Ingiald had gone to a farmhouse upon an island, and how his enemies had come in boats, and surrounded him, and how they had killed him, for all the wicked deeds which he had done. “Moreover,” said the man, “his enemies are so many that it is not safe for you to stay in the land.” Olaf said:

"There are forests and lands to live in beyond Svithiod." "Which way will you go?" said the man. "Northward," said Olaf. So he and a few of his friends went northward. The hills grew higher, and barer, and they left the forests behind them, down in the valleys. After many days they were so high up that all the mountain-tops were snowy, and they walked over the snow for hours and hours. But at last they began to go downhill. Soon they came to the forests again, forests of birch and of fir trees. Between the great mountains the sea ran far into the land. There Olaf and his men cut down the trees, and built themselves houses, and cleared fields. In Svithiod men laughed when they heard it, and called Olaf 'Olaf Woodcutter.' But the Northmen lived well there, and they became the best boatmen and shipmen of any people that had ever been.

It became a custom among the Northmen to go out freebooting every summer, sailing home in the autumn. They sailed to the land of the Franks, which they called Frankland, and sailed up the rivers, and took everything valuable from the villages and towns, and killed many people. And the same they did in England.

XV

EUDES

FOR many years after the time of Geneviève the city of Paris was safe and peaceful. Then on a day in November word was brought to Gozlin, the Bishop of Paris, that the ships of the Northmen had come into the Seine, and that they came nearer every day. "If you go on to the walls," said the messenger, "you will see the smoke of the villages burning." Bishop Gozlin was an old man. He climbed slowly up on to the walls to see if this were so. He went to the north side of the city and saw the river flowing, and the houses that were built on the northern bank, and he saw the great bridge which was newly built. "Ah," said he, "if the Northmen come, you, my poor bridge, will have much to bear." The bridge was only eighteen feet wide. It was made narrow, so that only a few enemies could get on it at a time. It was built of stone with several arches, except in the middle, where one section was made of wood. It had walls along its sides. At either end was a round stone tower. The one at this end was finished. The one at the

other end was not : it was only one story high, with a wide ditch. A roadway crossed the ditch straight to the bridge. Builders were carrying their hods of mortar and lowering stones into position on it. "You must work fast, my children," thought Gozlin.

Then old Bishop Gozlin walked to the south side of the walls. He saw the river flowing and the green fields on the bank, where the men were ploughing. He came to the little bridge, built of wood, with a little wooden tower at the far end. "I wish it had been built of stone too," said Gozlin to himself. As long as these bridges were guarded, no ship could sail under them and reach the country above Paris.

Then Gozlin went to the west side of the walls. He saw the river flowing down, and far away he saw a great dark cloud of smoke. Every one who was with him called out : "Look ! Look ! Alas ! that is the Northmen's work !" Then Gozlin said : "Send for Eudes the Count." He went down to his house. Those who were with him ran down into the town. Soon the bells were ringing and the people running hither and thither to prepare.

Count Eudes came to Gozlin in the Bishop's hall. Eudes was tall and very good to look upon. He could run and leap as fast and far as a horse, and in all his fights with other men he had always conquered. Eudes and Bishop

Gozlin decided that the people living on the banks must be brought into Paris, and provided with food and lodging. "And I," said Eudes, "will see that the men have their weapons ready and know their places. But the tower at the end of the bridge is only one story high. This may be a great misfortune." "And I," said Gozlin, "will see that the carpenters make all possible haste to finish the frames and the planks for the second story." "And let the butchers do their part," said Eudes, "for I must have hides to stretch over the planks."

Every day the smoke could be seen nearer and nearer. It was not many days before the ships of the Northmen came in sight round the bend of the river; seven hundred longships, serpents, and sea-lions, with sails of blue and red and green, and long oars at each side. The Northmen ran their ships upon the shore of the river, below the island. No one knew what would happen next.

Next day, at daybreak, Eudes was up on the walls. Bishop Gozlin sat in his hall. There came to him Siegfried, the leader of the Northmen. Siegfried was considered a very wise man by all the Northmen. He was always the craftiest in council and in fight. His intention was to pass Paris and plunder the lands above it.

Siegfried was richly dressed in a scarlet tunic

and trousers and a cloak of bear-skin. He bent his head before Gozlin and said to him : "Allow us to pass under the bridges in peace. We will not so much as touch anything in the town. We will even see that your goods, and those of Eudes, are kept safe." Gozlin said : "This city was given to Eudes and to me by King Charles to defend it. If it had been given to you, would you have done as you have asked me to do ?" Siegfried said : "If I did, I should deserve to be beheaded and devoured by dogs." So the Bishop refused his demand and Siegfried went away, and the doom of Paris was decided.

* * * * *

Next day, at dawn, the Northmen came out of their ships. Each crew came out from the gangway in the front of the ship, and from the gangway at the back. Each man had his sword, and his shield edged with iron, and a great bundle of javelins. There were thousands of them. From the walls the citizens saw them running along the bank, toward the tower at the end of the bridge.

All the bells in the town rang the alarm. Weeping and wailing went up from the walls. The trumpets sounded, the wooden planks of the great bridge shook as the best men of Paris marched across. Eudes was in the tower already. Soon old Bishop Gozlin passed over

the bridge. Already he had been to the carpenters in the town. He said to them: "My children, let not one of you put down his plane or his saw or his hammer to-day, come what may, for your work will be wanted to-night more than ever." The carpenters stayed at their work; every hour the wooden frames and walls for the tower grew nearer and nearer to being ready.

First the Northmen threw their darts at the men on the tower. They flew so thick that the sky seemed dark. They threw ropes and tried to drag down the stones of the tower. The Northmen dragged down the topmost stones, but they could do no more, so fast did Eudes and his men shoot arrows and hurl javelins upon them. Never did Eudes's javelin miss its mark. Every time he hurled it a Northman fell. All that day long they kept the Northmen out of the tower. At last the sun went down. Glad and thankful were the Franks. Sad and sorry were the Northmen. They went back to their ships to rest and eat.

Eudes came back hastily to Paris over the bridge. He called to the carpenters, and to the men of Paris to help them. All night long hammering went on at the tower. All night long Eudes was there. All night long the men of Paris carried up beams and planks and iron bolts. At the earliest dawn the tower was

built two stories high; the upper part was all of wood. Across all the planks were nailed ox-hides with the smooth side outward. No fire could catch there. The work of seven ordinary days was done in that one night.

When it was light enough to see, behold, there were the Northmen coming back in thousands. But Eudes and his two hundred men stood at their places in the tower. The Northmen began hurling their stones and javelins so thickly that Eudes and his men could not see the sun. Now they came on up to the ditch, and on to the roadway across the ditch, even to the very door of the tower. Running along the roadway beneath a shelter made of boards, some Northmen came to the wall and began to dig at the foot of it with axe and pick. No javelin could hit them there. Eudes said: "Run to the town for oil and wax." It was done. They were melted together over a fire. Then Eudes took a jug and filled it, and set it alight, and poured the blazing stuff down upon the Northmen's shelter. Meantime he ordered the men of Paris to send out anything heavy which could be thrown down upon the Northmen. The wood caught fire; the fire ate up the shelter; burning wood dropped upon the men below; their long hair and their leather coats were all covered with the burning liquid. They rushed to the ditch

and to the river-bank for water to dip their heads in. The men upon the tower laughed at them, calling out: "Run, run, wash your heads and tidy your hair." Stones crashed upon the painted shields of the Northmen; the javelins rattled upon the shields. The two hundred Franks fought on and on. But the Northmen came on in fresh bands. Foot by foot they gained their way across the roadway, and battered down the door. With a horrible crash it fell. Eudes and his best men were there. When the door fell, the Northmen saw them all in rank across the path. Then for a little space the Northmen fell back. They did not dare to come on.

Eudes came forward into the gateway and counted the Northmen waiting outside. Suddenly there was a shout; a great thing was hurled from the top of the tower and crashed down among the Northmen. It was a great wheel which the men of Paris had brought and thrown.

Now the Northmen dared not advance to the attack straightway. Instead they piled up high masses of brushwood and timber all against the door. The Franks could not prevent this. The Northmen lighted the pile. Thick rose the smoke. It wrapped round the tower. The men and women of Paris, all on the walls, saw it; they cried to one another in despair: "See, the

tower burns! Now the end has come for them and for us all!"

For an hour they watched the smoke and knew not what was happening. Two men among them said: "Have they perished? We cannot bear not to know. We must and will find out." They went along the bridge. One bore a yellow flag; they both carried javelins. The men of Paris watched them. When they reached the middle of the bridge, one said: "How the smoke chokes us!" The other said: "This part of the bridge was clear when we started; now the smoke is coming thicker and thicker!" Indeed, it came so thick that they were nearly choked. Then suddenly the smoke passed over, and they could breathe. "This is wonderful," said one. "Nay," said the other, "the wind has changed. I begin to see the tower—it still stands." Then they began to hope, and they ran faster; and when they came to the tower they found that it was not harmed, and Eudes they saw and all his men, parched with thirst, and dark with smoke, but alive and safe. Only in one place had the wood begun to burn. They lowered buckets into the river and put out this fire.

Now the thick smoke blew upon the Northmen; they looked like men in a fog. Eudes drew his bow and shot upon the Northmen, and his men did the same, so that many perished.

Now the sun began to sink, and the Northmen retreated to their ships. Thus on the second day the tower was not taken.

At dawn on the third day Eudes roused his men, and said : " Go to your places, so that we are ready for them." The sun appeared, and rose higher and higher, and the mist rolled away, and lo ! not a man of the Northmen was to be seen nearer than the ships.

After this day the Northmen dug up banks of earth, and made a camp. They drew up their ships on the bank. There they dwelt, ravaging all the country round.

* * * * *

December passed and Christmas came, and it passed, and New Year's Day and the month of January. February came, the month which men call February Fill-dyke. The rain fell day by day. The River Seine grew higher and yellower, and lapped against the walls. The townspeople said : " The higher the river, the safer we are." But the little bridge, built of wood, could not stand against the weight of the water. The middle part of it fell down and was swept away. So the people could not get to the southern bank. Soon their meals began to get scantier and scantier.

Bishop Gozlin and Count Eudes agreed with one another that if they could obtain no help

from outside they must try to make terms with Siegfried. In March Bishop Gozlin said to Eudes : " Now you must go and see what terms you can make."

Eudes took his shield and had his sword by his side and a couple of javelins. He opened the door of the tower, advanced beyond the ditch, and called to the Northmen, demanding to speak to Siegfried peacefully. Siegfried came from the camp. They met upon the flat, grassy field beyond the ditch. There they talked about the peace. While this was going on one Northman told another in the camp that Eudes was there. When the news came to a crew of Northmen who did not come from Siegfried's part of the country, " Ho," cried one, " this man would be a good piece of plunder." So he and his mates took their swords, as sharp as glass, and their strong shields, bound with iron rims, and away they went. When they came to the place some stood on the road across the ditch, so that no one could pass that way without their leave. A score went up to Eudes, and pushed between him and Siegfried, without any regard for the King. They had their swords half drawn, and soon they drew them fully, but quicker than any of them Eudes pulled out his sword and drew back ; then, bounding forward, he gave blow after blow to left and right. They stepped

a little back, although twenty to one, for they were too crowded to fight well. Eudes saw that he could not pass back by the road, because of the men who were running from it toward him. So he turned to the Northmen.

He threw himself across the ditch—such a leap as a man could hardly take without armour and with a good run. Recovering, he held his shield in its place, and with his javelins held the Northmen at the edge of the ditch for a moment's space. Now the Franks ran out from the tower, and so Eudes came back safely. The Northmen said he had done a good feat of fighting. Siegfried said nothing, but he looked pale and angry. Many men noticed this. He said to his own men : “We will leave this place as soon as possible ; none of us will be able to stay here much longer.” He sent a message to Eudes and Bishop Gozlin, that if they would give him silver he would depart. Old Bishop Gozlin lay in his bed in his house. He was ill from weariness. Eudes told him what was done. The Bishop said : “He shall have sixty pounds of the purest silver. Tell him this, and let him go.” So it was done. Then Siegfried and his own men turned their ships' heads down the river and went away. But many of the Northmen remained before the city. And just after this old Bishop Gozlin died. Then in

every street the people had tears in their eyes. Many wept and said: "What shall we do without our Bishop who defended us so well?" Many said: "Ah, but we still have Eudes, our Count." Now Eudes saw how many people there were in the town, and so little food. He thought: "If King Charles really knew what straits we were in, he would surely save us." Then, one night, Eudes stole away secretly, to go and tell the King.

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The summer drew on; the days grew longer. It was now July. The people asked: "Where is Eudes?" But those he had trusted with the town kept it safe. The watchmen upon the walls, at break of day, saw the sun strike upon something shining and sparkling. "That looks like a troop of horsemen on the hill," said one watchman to another. "They are coming down the hill this way."

Some time after the men upon the tower saw a man galloping toward them from that direction. Northmen were chasing him, riding as hard as they could ride. The men ran down and pushed back the bolts of the great door, for they knew who it was. Eudes galloped in; his horse was panting. Then Eudes told them how he had been far away, and how he had told the King what need they were in, and how the King

had given him some companions to guard him, and how at the top of the hill he had parted from his friends, because they were too few to attack the Northmen, and too many to be risked.

They were all happy, both to know that the King knew of their need, and especially that Eudes had come back. So, too, were all the people of Paris.

All the people thought that the King would come quickly, as Eudes had come. Eudes said : "Patience, good people. The King is far away. I could not go all the way to him, but I sent a safe messenger to him. It will be some time before the King can come."

July passed, and August passed, and the weather grew hot, and the river sank lower and lower. September began, and the first week passed, and the second. The people of Paris held out, fighting and fighting, and growing hungrier and hungrier.

Then late in September the King came. He encamped with all his army. Some were on the northern bank, beyond the tower. Others were on the southern bank. Then the people of Paris said : "Now we shall quickly see the King put our enemies to flight." But alas ! day by day the King sat in his tent and did nothing. But he allowed the Northmen to come and to speak to him of peace. Meantime the chief of the

Northmen sent a messenger away out of their camp secretly.

At last the foggy month of November came. Then Charles was told by a poor man who came on purpose: "Siegfried is coming back. I have seen his ships; and he brings Northmen from all parts, in numbers." When this was known Eudes said: "We must fight them quickly before Siegfried comes." But Charles sent immediately for the chiefs of the Northmen. He gave them all that they asked. He promised to pay them seven hundred pounds of silver in March if they would leave at once.

Then the Northmen said: "It is now winter; we cannot go home now; give us leave to enter some part of your land, and to take all that we need from the people." Even this Charles granted. He said they might enter that country which lay above Paris. Then, hearing that Siegfried was now near, Charles ordered that all his armies should follow him. Then he rode rapidly away.

The men of Paris said: "Come what may, we will not allow these Northmen to sail under our bridges." So they compelled the Northmen to carry their ships with great labour and toil, to cross the land from below the bridge to far above it, as far as a man could walk in half an hour.

Thus at last Paris was free from the Northmen. Never again did the men of Paris trust the King. Not long after they chose Eudes to be their king. So did the men of all that part of the country.

XVI

ROLF

SIEGFRIED left Norway in the time of King Harald. This Harald became the greatest King that had ever ruled in Norway. When he was young he made a vow: "Never will I clip or comb my hair until I have subdued the whole of Norway." Longer and longer, and thicker and thicker grew his hair and his beard. It grew quite dark, because he never washed it. Men called him Harald Tousle-head. But no one dared to laugh at him; they all feared him, for he subdued a fresh part of Norway every year.

At last Harald subdued a district called More. He set Ragnwald over it to rule it, and called him a Jarl, or Earl. The way in which he made him an Earl was this: The King sat on his high seat with Ragnwald standing before him. He fastened a sword to Ragnwald's belt. He hung a shield, rimmed with iron, round Ragnwald's neck. He said to him: "Be thou my Earl in the country called More." Earl Ragnwald ruled in such

a way that he was called Ragnwald the Mighty.

Earl Ragnwald was told that in a certain district a certain man would not take King Harald for his King. So he went in his long-ship, with a hundred men, well armed and strong. They entered the bay where that man's homestead was. The bay was such as is called a fiord. It was very narrow and long. The fells rose up on either hand as steep as the walls of a house. Between the fells and the sea was some good grazing and corn land. These lands are called 'Mores.' Because there are so many in that district, the district is called 'More.'

On the grazing grounds by the sea was the man's homestead. In the evening Ragnwald and his men came there. They had been rowing all day. Ragnwald ordered them to disembark. It was but a short way to the farm buildings.

The watchmen were all in the homestead; not a man was outside; all were within, drinking. Ragnwald set a ring of men round the farm. He had a war-blast blown upon his trumpet. Then he said: "Call into the house that all women, children, and old men come out." They all came out. Then Ragnwald said: "Set fire to the house."

So they set light to it, and it soon caught,

because the wood was dry and the walls were tarred and the roof was thatched with birch-bark. Nor could the men make their way out, for Ragnwald's men met them. So all men who were in the house perished.

Then Ragnwald went down to his ships with his men. As soon as the day dawned he had his sails hoisted, and sailed home, very well pleased with what he had done.

At the end of all this Earl Ragnwald invited the King to a feast at his homestead in More. It was now ten years since King Harald's vow. He had subdued the whole land of Norway.

Ragnwald invited all the best men in the country. His hall was new and magnificent. All round the walls inside shields were hung. Every man's weapons hung above the place where he should sit. The King's high seat was in the middle of the long side.

The King came, and left a few of his men to guard his ships. He was a tall man, and would have been handsome, had it not been for his hair. Dark and dishevelled it hung over his face. One man said to another: "The King looks like a wolf, staring out of a thicket of holly."

Ragnwald came down to the shore to meet the King, and made him welcome, and brought him to the farm. When they had doffed their

sea-clothes and donned mantles, Ragnwald ordered a large bowl of beer of the best to be brought, and they were all served ; but the King was served with his drink in a horn decorated with a golden dragon curled round it.

When King Harald came into the hall he said to Earl Ragnwald : " You were witness once of a vow of mine. Do you remember it ? " Ragnwald answered : " Long ago is it, but long is my memory, as long as your hair. In my opinion, King, your vow is now fulfilled, for the whole land is subdued, and is in good peace." Harald took all the men in the hall to witness if this were so, and they all said it was true. Ragnwald said : " At this time your vow is ended." Then he had prepared for the King a bath of hot, clear water. The King bathed, and dressed himself in a red tunic, a grey cloak with a golden clasp, and a cap of bear-skin. His hair was as dark as the bear's fur. Then he came into the hall. Earl Ragnwald said : " Let every one bear witness that the vow is fulfilled." With a comb of ivory and scissors of bronze he cut around the King's neck and across his forehead. Hard work had the scissors to meet through so much hair. When Ragnwald had done, there stood the King, with short hair, fair and bright like threads of gold ! Ragnwald said : " Harald Fair-hair is a more comely man than old Tousle-head."

Harald Fair-hair the King was called from that day.

Earl Ragnwald had five sons—Hallad, Einar, Hrollaug, Rolf, and Thorer. The first three were now nearly full-grown men. They were old enough to go freebooting. Hallad was lazy and quiet, and so, too, was Hrollaug. Einar was very ugly, and blind in one eye, but with his one eye he saw more than most men see with two. He could make very good songs and riddles. Moreover, his arms were very strong and he was mighty in battle. Rolf and Thorer were as yet only children. Thorer was quiet and slow and greedy. Rolf was not yet fourteen years old. But at seven years old he was twice as tall as most boys of his age. At twelve years he was as tall as Einar. His brothers laughed at him, and said: "Go outside, Rolf, or you will grow through the roof while we sit here." But still Rolf grew taller every year.

Now Earl Ragnwald thought: "My sons ought to win fame, like their forefathers." So he gave Hallad, the eldest, a longship at the beginning of winter, and sent him to rule over the Orkney Islands. Whenever he saw Einar, the second son, whether in the smithy forging iron, or beating out corn in the barn, or fishing in the sea, or when they sat at the fireside in the evening and drank together, he said: "Lazy

fellow, can you find no place to be in but at home?" For in his heart he wished him to do great deeds. And he spoke like words to his other sons.

In the spring a longship was seen coming round the headland from the west. It came up and anchored off the homestead. Who was it but Hallad and his crew come home again! Hallad came into the hall and spoke to his father. All Earl Ragnwald said was: "What brings you back, son?" Hallad said: "Wearisome it is to sit in the barren isle of Orkney, where there is not even a tree to cut down for a fire. And wearisome it is to fight with the Northmen, who will not obey those who should rule over them!" Earl Ragnwald grew red with anger, and he said to all his sons: "You are very unlike your ancestors! Great men and valiant they were, while you are nothing but coal-eaters and drinkers of ale!"

Then said Einar the Ugly: "I have enjoyed little honour among you, and have but little love here to lose; now if you will give me a longship and men, I will go west to the island." Earl Ragnwald said: "Little sorrow will it be to me if you never come back, for I have little hope that you will ever be an honour to your people."

Nevertheless Earl Ragnwald gave Einar an excellent longship, with ship-tents and sails, and

the best rigging and food, and a good force of strong and brave men. Einar sailed west to the Orkneys. There met him Northmen in two ships to fight him. But he attacked them and gained the victory straightway. Then he became a very mighty earl and ruled over the islands.

All this time Einar had no news of his father. At last a man came from Norway to the isle of Orkney, with his merchant ship, trading. Einar asked him what news there was of Earl Ragnwald. He said : "Earl Ragnwald is the mightiest of the earls, and he is the greatest friend of King Harald. And of all your brothers none is so noteworthy as Rolf. For he is so tall now and so strong that no horse can carry him. He must walk wherever he goes. So he is called Ganger Rolf or Rolf the Walker, and your father has given him a longship and he has gone out freebooting." Einar said : "This will please Earl Ragnwald."

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Yearly the same man came to Einar in the isle of Orkney. Yearly he said the same, until a certain year. Then he said : "Ah, Earl Einar, your brother Rolf did a thing which King Harald does not allow, and in consequence he is driven right out of Norway for good and all. For as he came back from freebooting his men had

eaten all their meat. So he put in to shore. There were some good oxen and cattle grazing on the meadow by the sea, and he took them and killed them without asking whose they were, or upon whose ground. Now this happened in the kingdom of Norway, where King Harald has forbidden this to be done, and he and all the men of the country declared that Rolf was an outlaw." That meant that Rolf must never come back to Norway, for if he did, any man might kill him. When Einar heard this he said: "How will my father like his son Rolf to win fame as an outlaw?"

Not long after that the man came again. He said to Einar: "Much has happened in Norway that concerns you, yet I am not willing to tell you, for fear of your anger." Einar answered: "Why should I be angry with you and not with the doer of the evil deed? I shall be grateful if you tell me."

The man said: "The sons of King Harald grew jealous of Earl Ragnwald. One of them set off with a great force; he came suddenly upon the Earl in his homestead. Then he surrounded the farm with soldiers and set fire to it; so Earl Ragnwald was burnt in the house." Einar said: "I thank you for telling me this. What is the name of that son of King Harald who did this?" He asked this because he knew them all. The man answered: "Halfdan."

"Where is Halfdan now?" said Einar. "He is said to have set sail for the Orkneys, for he feared the anger of King Harald," said the man.

Now Einar and all his men watched for the longship of Halfdan. At last they saw it coming, a very fine longship, fit for a king's son. Then Einar and all his men went away. Einar sang to his men :

"Where are the sons
Of Ragnwald the mighty ?
Hallad, the first-born ?
Rolf the Walker,
Mighty in battle,
Long of limb ?
Thorer the silent,
The youngest-born ?
I see before me—
Halfdan, who slew him.
Where are the sons
Of Ragnwald the mighty ?

"Revenge for Ragnwald,
Revenge for the wise Earl,
Revenge for his father,
Will Einar take."

Halfdan came into the anchorage and set up the ship-tents over the ships and lay there. Then Earl Einar came back. They met, and after a short fight Halfdan fled. As soon as it was light next day Einar searched the whole island, but he could not find Halfdan. Then Einar looked over the grey sea, and on one of

the grey islands near by he saw something. He said: "What is that I see upon the isle of Ronaldshay? Is it a man or a bird? Sometimes it raises itself up and sometimes it lies down again." They went to it, found that it was Halfdan and took him prisoner. Then Einar took Halfdan away. When Einar came back he showed the men his sword. Then he sang:

"Red is my sword.
Revenge for Ragnwald
Have I taken,
Einar his son."

And he and his men buried Halfdan on the beach. They made a great mound of stones and gravel over him.

* * * * *

Now Einar became a great and famous earl in the Orkney Islands. Men said: "Einar is as great a man as any of his forefathers were."

Of his brother Rolf little is told at this time but that he was a fugitive. He left Norway with one longship and went to a certain island. There very many brave fighting-men came to him, bringing their ships and all manner of provisions. Soon he had six ships. Then he sailed away. For many years little was known of him in Norway. In the northern part of England, however, and on other coasts, he was

well known, for he and his men plundered and burnt, and everywhere they fought they won. Rolf knew so many ways of fighting that no one could trick him in battle. Ever more Northmen came to Rolf, for he had a great name. At last he had so large a fleet that he sailed over to Frankland and attacked the land from north and west and south. No small harm he did in Frankland, and no small booty he won for two or three years.

At last Rolf and all his men sailed up the Seine. The men of the country all came together, very well armed. Now there was among them a Northman, to whom the King of Frankland had given land in those parts, so that he was wholly upon his side. His name was Hasting. The leader of the Franks said to him : " You are of the same country as these Northmen ; give us now good advice what to do." He replied : " If you had asked my advice three days ago, I could by now have given you good advice. But now, send messengers to ask what they are going to do." The leader said : " I pray you, go quickly yourself, and ask what their will is." Hasting said : " By no means will I go alone." Then two men were chosen to go with him. They both knew the Northmen's tongue. They rode on their horses down the bank of the river. Presently they came opposite the place where the ships of Rolf and

his men lay in the river at anchor. They saw the men lying in the ships. Hasting shouted across : "The King of this land desires to know where you come from, where you are going, and what your will is." They shouted back : "We are Northmen. We come to fight in Frankland, and to take spoil." Hasting asked : "Who is your commander ?" The Northmen answered : "We are all of equal power." Now Hasting thought, "Have they heard of me ?" and said : "Have you ever heard anything of one Hasting, your countryman, who came here with many other fighting-men ?" "Certainly we have," said they. "He made a good beginning and a bad end." Then Hasting said : "Will you submit to King Charles, the King of this land ? If you will, he will give you good lands." Then they said : "By no manner of means will we submit to him." The two Frankish men called out : "What then will you do ?" The Northmen called back : "Get away and don't stand there shouting, for we don't care for the traps you are setting and we shall not tell you what we mean to do."

Hasting told all this to the Frankish leader. He said : "Hasting, you are one of that race ; you know all the ways of their fighting ; tell us what to do." Hasting said : "If you fight them, you will be running into great danger." One of the Franks, called Rotland, said : "Why

do you ask Hasting? A wolf never leads a wolf into the trap, nor a fox a fox." Then Hasting said: "After that I will never dissuade you from this war." Unlucky was his speech, especially for Rotland.

Meanwhile Rolf and his men had left their ships and come upon the bank. Then they dug a camp. They piled up the earth in a great circle. They beat it flat with their spades. They left a wide space for the door. When it was finished Rolf divided his men into two parties. One he ordered to stand in martial array, with their red war-shields on their arms, plain to be seen. The other he ordered to crouch down under the wall of the camp and to cover themselves so that they could not be seen.

When the Franks came near they spied the Northmen standing in war-like array. Rotland said: "Marvellously few are they and wide is their gate; let those who will enter first come with me!" He carried the standard forward. When they came within the gate, lo! from either side the hidden warriors rushed out. There in the gate they fought it out, fighting very fairly, one against one. No one was so base as to attack a man who was fighting already. But Rotland and the greater number of his men lost their lives in that place. Hasting and the Franks fled.

After this, during two or three years, Rolf and his men plundered all that part of the country. Only the city of Paris was too strong for them to take.

* * * *

At last King Charles called all the mighty men of the Franks together. He said : "Give me some counsel." They said : "We will give you good counsel, to relieve the people whose misery is so great. Give to this Rolf and his men all the land between the Seine and the sea. Let him be your man, so will you make this dangerous fighter your own."

So King Charles sent a message to Rolf. Rolf and his men liked it well, all but two things. One thing was that Rolf should become King Charles's man ; the other was that he should be baptized. When the Northmen heard this, at first there was noise and tumult. One Northman said : "We do not want you to break our laws ; we want you to sacrifice as others have done before you ; for we have not changed our minds about Thor and Odin." But Rolf said : "I will be christened ; and now, here are two choices : either you must be christened, or you must fight a battle against me to-day, and may God decide !" Then they all consented to do whatever he commanded and to follow him in all that he wished. Rolf said : "I will make

you great and powerful men, for I trust you best, for the sake of our kinship one with another."

A small river ran into the Seine called the Epte. King Charles appointed the banks of the river to be his meeting-place with the Northmen. His army camped upon one bank, the Northmen upon the other. He sent a message to Rolf to tell him now he must become his man. Rolf said: "I will be his under-man, as my father, Earl Ragnwald, was under-man to King Harald." But the messenger said: "You must become his man." Rolf said: "What does that mean?" The messenger said: "You must put your hands between his hands and say: 'I become your man, of life, and limb, and worldly honour.'" "I will do this," said Rolf, "although neither my father, nor my father's father, nor any before them did it." The Franks said: "Because he is so great a King, you must kiss his foot." Rolf said: "I will kiss no man's foot."

Then they begged and entreated him, but he would not. So they said: "Is there any of your men who would do it for you?" He asked, and one came forward at once. Now this man was a great champion, a singer, and a rough and rude man. So it was agreed that he should do it.

They all came where King Charles was, with

all the mighty men of Frankland. Rolf knelt down and put his hands between those of the King, and vowed to be his man. He did his part well. Then forward came the Northman before them all, stood upright before the King, gripped his foot, and lifted it high right up to his mouth. And the poor King's other leg went up into the air and over he went; backward he fell, tumbling down. Loud was the laughter of the Northmen. Loud clashed the swords of the Franks. Red with rage, they drew them and ran toward the Northmen. Rolf and the great men of the Franks ran there, and stopped them; they stopped the Northmen. Hard pains and difficulty it cost them to make good what had been done.

Nevertheless, after this Ganger Rolf was baptized and called Robert, Duke of the Northmen. He was famous all over England, Frankland, and Norway. Ganger Rolf's grandson was Richard the Fearless, whose great-grandson was William the Conqueror, from whom later kings of the English were descended. Thus of the sons of Ragnwald, Einar and Ganger Rolf won fame, but Rolf the most.

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